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# THE HISTORY OF HEROD.

LOVE AND WYMAN, LTD., PRINTERS,  
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LONDON, W.C.

THE  
HISTORY OF HEROD;  
OR,  
ANOTHER LOOK AT A MAN  
EMERGING FROM 'TWENTY CENTURIES  
OF CALUMNY.

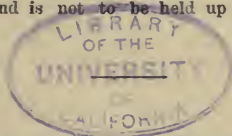
BY  
JOHN VICKERS.  
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New Revised Edition.

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In the revision of this work several alterations and additions have been made by way of reinforcement, but none affecting its character as an attempt to vindicate Herod from outrageous calumny and exhibit his good qualities, while admitting that he had also grave faults when stricken with age, and is not to be held up as a pattern ruler for modern imitation.



WILLIAMS & NORGATE,  
11, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON,  
AND 7, BROAD STREET, OXFORD.

EDINBURGH AGENCY: 20, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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Herod entitled to a defence—The protracted hostility against him relenting—The bias of Josephus—The credit of Josephus as compared with that of Nicolaus of Damascus—General view of the character and position of Herod—The unparalleled array of prejudice that has gathered about him.

**I**N our modern administration of justice it is always considered a matter of the utmost importance that those who are accused of any grave offence should be honestly and vigorously defended. Whatever their reputation may be, or the opinion generally entertained of them—whether highly esteemed throughout the community, or greatly hated and despised—all that can be reasonably said in their behalf, and in answer to the indictment brought against them, the judicial mind listens to with unfeigned respect. A man of very bad character may be charged with a crime, and the evidence of his guilt may appear overwhelming, but he is still allowed ample time to prepare a defence, and the jury before whom he is tried are expected to reserve their judgment, and pass no condemnation on him till they shall see that defence completely broken down. When a person is thus finally condemned, it is satisfactory to be able to show that he had at least a fair trial, that popular

passion and prejudice were barred out of court, while all was done that could be done by skilful and forcible pleading to clear and acquit him of the charge.

Why should this right of defence, which is granted to the living, be not equally accorded to the memory of the dead? It occasionally happens that a serious charge gets circulated for the first time to the prejudice of a man a few months or years after he has been borne to the silent tomb, when he is no longer able to publish an *Apologia*, or say a word to set himself right. Had the accusation been made in his lifetime, justice would have been fairly meted out to him; but, now, whether he gets defended or not depends altogether on circumstances—that is, on the number and influence of his friends. When anything is written to clear the character of a popular man, like Lord Byron, from aspersion, he is generally said to be vindicated, and forthwith obtains from the public a verdict of acquittal. On the other hand, should an exculpatory plea be put forth in behalf of a more wronged and friendless son of Adam, the world directly cries out that he is being “white-washed.” You may go as a lawyer and varnish the character of the blackest villain arraigned before a court of justice, and perhaps mislead a jury, and, provided that he has many sympathisers, you will get honour and praise, and a handsome fee for your services. But if you honestly attempt to rehabilitate one who has long had a place among the villains of history—if you endeavour to lay bare the true native hue of an ancient figure which you firmly believe to be daubed and disguised with hostile dirt—you will rouse resentment by what will be considered an unwarrantable deviation from conventional lines, and are pretty sure to get befouled yourself from the same source.



To colour a person's life either for the better or the worse so as to deceive people who want correct information, is a dishonest artifice which ought to be unsparingly exposed. It is very wrong, as all will allow, to blacken a sober man by alleging that he is addicted to intemperance, and it is equally wrong to whitewash a drunkard by giving him a character for sobriety. Modern historians will not be found so unscrupulous as this, so regardless of truth as to impute to people qualities which it is well known they do not possess. If they err at all in respect to fairness, it is in performing their work with honest partiality, and they must be expected to have some bias, because a strictly unprejudiced writer will hardly be found anywhere. Those who occasionally present us with new versions of English history differ in sentiment like the rest of their countrymen, or like the members who represent them in Parliament. Mr. Kent, in one of his chapters, takes an unfavourable view of Cromwell, and is consequently disposed to dwell much on the worst side of his character, and mention every well-authenticated fact that tends to his discredit. Mr. Cornwall, on the other hand, is an admirer of the Protector, and believing that Kent has not done complete justice to him, is at some pains to apologise for his questionable acts, and expatiate at considerable length on his merits. It cannot be said then that Cromwell's character is coloured by either of these writers, but Kent's history is clearly one-sided, while that of Cornwall is as much t'other-sided, and therefore does good service in the way of completion or correction.

The rude chroniclers of ancient times differed in sentiment, as modern historians do; they took more or less partial views of distinguished men, but were less careful to speak of them truthfully. If they entertained a strong dislike for

some person, they not only set down against him the adverse facts that they were able to collect, but placed to his discredit calumnious fables in addition. They seldom took the trouble to sift and verify reports which loosely circulated, but accepted readily any story that accorded with their bias as unimpeachable testimony. Thus they formed a history which, besides being one-sided, was very strongly coloured, and there was little probability of its meeting with speedy correction: for no printing press then existed to multiply copies of their work and give it at once a wide publicity, and no reviewers stood ready to question its statements and point out its palpable defects. It was read by a few sympathetic people, and, being kept by them in comparative obscurity, was long saved from adverse criticism. When, in the course of time, it got into the hands of learned men who doubted its accuracy, the documentary evidence which they needed for its refutation had perhaps disappeared, or could only be collected from various places with very great difficulty. Under these circumstances they would think it hardly worth while to reply to the partial narrative for the sake of the few people who cared for historical truth, and would suffer it to abide as a trusted record. It is thus easy to understand why many prejudiced stories of a remote time were not corrected by contemporary writers, nor yet by their immediate successors, and so have come down to this inquiring age for correction. And in most instances their untruthfulness has now become so clear, and the animus which dictated them so apparent to all who are not blinded by prejudice, that diligent archæological researches and the recovery of lost contemporary writings to confute them are wholly unnecessary. The proverb says, in reference to *ex parte* testimony, "One story is very good till

another is told," but the adverse statement does not always come quickly, and a calumnious story may hold good for hundreds, and even for thousands, of years. It will thus, from long recognition as historical truth, acquire a venerable character, and any arguments which investigators at length advance for doubting its credibility are sure to be regarded with dissatisfaction by the majority of people who are interested in the world's literature. Because some ancient calumnies have been refuted by modern historical inquiry, there is supposed to have arisen in recent years a sort of fashion or imitative movement for embellishing the bad reputations of bygone times. Those who entertain this notion greatly over-estimate the influence of *La Mode* in determining the actions of mankind. We never hear it said that travellers are acting under a fashionable impulse when they explore distant regions of the earth and return with information which calls for some revision of our maps. It is well known that they are lovers of investigation having a sincere desire to extend in some particular direction the bounds of human knowledge. One who has leisure and means for travel may spend five years industriously journeying through Patagonia, and at the end of that period will be sure to have gleaned a number of facts about the country which are new and strange to Europeans. Another person of inquiring mind may, during the same years, look closely into some neglected historical region that has for him a special attraction. He, too, will be likely to make a few discoveries in that time, but may still experience great difficulty in getting other people to believe that he has laboured to any good purpose. For the field of inquiry which has interested him strongly and continuously may have no particular interest for them, and to the examination of results which

he has arduously arrived at in five years, they will perhaps not be able to devote more than five hours.

For a long time past uninquiring people have expressed disapproval of arguments occasionally advanced to discredit old partisan testimony, and thus change, to a certain extent, the complexion of historical characters. Horace Walpole, writing in the eighteenth century, says: "There is a kind of literary superstition which men are apt to contract from habit, and which makes them look on any attempt towards shaking their belief in any established character, whether good or bad, as a sort of profanation. They are determined to adhere to their first impressions, and are equally offended at any innovation, whether the person whose character is to be raised or depressed were patriot or tyrant, saint or sinner. No indulgence is granted to those who would ascertain the truth. The more the testimonies on either side have been multiplied, the stronger is the conviction, though it generally happens that the original evidence is wonderfully slender, and that the number of writers have but copied from one another—or, what is worse, have only added to the original without any new authority. Attachment so groundless is not to be regarded. If time brings new materials to light, if facts and dates confute historians, what does it signify that we have been for two or three hundred years under an error? Does antiquity consecrate darkness? Does a lie become venerable from its age? . . . So incompetent have the generality of historians been for the province they have undertaken that it is almost a question whether, if the dead of past ages could revive, they would be able to recognise the events of their own times as transmitted to us by ignorance and misrepresentation" (Historic Doubts, &c.).

This writer, in endeavouring to correct some of



the misrepresentations of history, undoubtedly overshoot the mark in one or two instances, yet he did not thereby mislead people; the errors which he fell into were speedily exposed, and it cannot be denied that he rendered, on the whole, very great service to historical investigation. He ably demonstrated the untrustworthiness of one-sided and prejudiced testimony as evidence of the perpetration of great political crimes, and put thoughtful people on their guard against taking for granted the truth of any partisan story, simply because it has long been established in the popular belief. There have been in every age certain notoriously bad men, whose guilt it would be most unreasonable to call in question, because it is vouched for by independent authorities, and people of widely different political and religious sentiments. What Walpole and those making similar researches have ever insisted on is simply this: when we have a man's character handed down to us only from a one-sided and partisan representation, as delineated either by his biassed friends or by his prejudiced foes, there will be good reason to question the drawing's correctness.

Religious leaders and political chiefs—those who take a prominent part in any of the great struggles which divide mankind—generally receive during lifetime, between the eulogy of their friends and the detraction of their foes, sometimes substantial justice. And even after death, so long as the contest in which they engaged is stoutly maintained, or the sentiment which they embodied still endures, and there is no great difference in the balance of parties, their merits and defects will continue to be set forth from opposite view-points with compensating fairness. But if a sweeping revolution should occur—if either their friends or their foes should become completely victorious, so

as to beat down every shred of opposition—witnesses both for and against them will not be very readily obtained by those who would make an impartial investigation of their character; the testimony respecting them will thenceforth be one-sided, so as to make them appear either much better or much worse than they were in reality. Unprejudiced students of history, who want to know what sort of a man Luther really was, have only to sit down quietly between some half-dozen of the best Catholic treatises which attack the reformer and a like number of the best Protestant works which defend him, and they will be sure to obtain in this way a good all-round view of his conduct and motives, and will be able satisfactorily to estimate his worth. But what if the religious movement headed by Luther had been much more successful, so as to uproot the Papacy, and make his own system of doctrine predominate throughout the Christian world? We should scarcely have been able, in that case, to find a single controversial work which ventured to set forth the worst side of his character, and his partisan biographers, writing under no sense of check, would have magnified his virtues and achievements in every possible way, so as to make him appear almost an angel descended from heaven. On the other hand, if his influence had declined, and his movement had so failed that fifty years after his death there had not been left to him a single follower, he would have now been represented by Catholic writers as nothing short of a misleading devil; we should have seen him pilloried in ecclesiastical history, and held up to reproach with the poor calumniated heresiarchs of the first and second centuries.

The character of those who have taken a leading part in the world's political conflicts is liable to be misrepresented in precisely the same way, and to

be imperfectly viewed by posterity through the mutations of opinion which occur after their death. Alexander, Cæsar, Cromwell, Peter, Frederic, Napoleon, are all ably assailed at the present day and ably defended, just as they were in lifetime, so that between friends and foes they continue to have a fair trial, and no injustice is likely to be done to their reputation. HEROD THE GREAT, while living, stood more favourably in general public estimation than most of these; he was highly respected by the foremost men in the world, the men who founded the Roman Empire; his government was the subject of much commendation on three continents; his friends, all the time he reigned over Palestine, decidedly outnumbered his enemies; yet the revolutionary changes which set in after his death, and the monstrous calumnies which were heaped upon him, multiplied the latter, year by year, and diminished the former, till, eventually, he had not a friend left. Consequently, instead of receiving anything like fair treatment at the hands of posterity, he has had to run a tremendous gauntlet of protracted hostility, being universally cursed and execrated, assailed from every side as by a fierce, unreasoning mob, and not defended at all. Admitting the truth of every evil thing that has been said against him; granting that he was an extremely bad man, a cruel tyrant, a heartless oppressor, a wholesale murderer; his memory is still subjected to a shameful injustice, only worthy of the ages of persecution, so long as we see his bad actions constantly paraded before the world in the darkest colours, while all the good which he did is carefully kept out of sight.

Happily, there may now be seen certain indications that the old ecclesiastical rage against Herod is relenting; the fierce invective with which he has been persistently assailed is giving place to a calmer

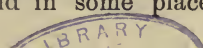
criticism, so that it may be just possible to obtain a hearing for a few words put forth in his defence. Dean Stanley, in his admirable "Lectures on the Jewish Church," and Keim, in his "History of Jesus of Nazara," although both greatly under the influence of Ewald, have none of that eminent scholar's strong bias and intense bitterness, and have written of the aspersed ruler of Judea in a far more just and charitable spirit. While too much inclined to give an unhesitating credit to all the crimes that he is charged with, they are not blind to the many noble features of his character, nor forgetful of the benefits which he conferred on his country. In short, they depict him from their view-point with commendable fairness, making it clear that he was not the entire monster which the world, from grim, one-sided representations, has long been accustomed to believe, but a brave son of Edom, with great talents and strong passions, anxious to do well and make those about him contented and happy, but sometimes doing evil from being maddened by much provocation, and placed in very difficult and trying circumstances. An American scholar, Mr. W. Willett, in his "Life and Times of Herod the Great" (Philadelphia), while no more disposed than the preceding writers to regard any of the terrible atrocities imputed to Herod as being exaggerated or unhistorical, is equally constrained to pity him, make every reasonable allowance for his crimes, and render him as much justice as can be expected, from one holding the common orthodox sentiments. He sees clearly that Herod, however barbarous, as judged by our standards, was a good, upright, conscientious man, compared with many of his contemporaries, and had right on his side far more than the rival Asmonean princes and their adherents—those reckless, false patriots, who were ever conspiring against him and doing their utmost to



involve the nation in a ruinous war. It is people of a liberal and charitable disposition, such as the above writers, and of like independent judgment, who will be willing to read patiently what is said in behalf of Herod and his much-maligned eldest son in the following chapters, although they may not be prepared to agree with their entire argument. Clearly, there is much new interest attached to Herod, when his life and conduct come to be examined afresh from a non-ecclesiastical viewpoint; and, of those who want independence, or will not give themselves the requisite trouble to make such an examination, it would be unreasonable to look for intelligent sympathy.

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In all probability there existed, long after Herod's death, a large amount of Herodian literature—correspondence, state documents, and other writings from various authors, which threw a very clear light on his character and government; but nearly the whole of the reliable information that we now have respecting him has come down to us in one historical volume which has escaped the wreck of time—the *works of Josephus*. It is desirable, therefore, at the very outset of any inquiry now made respecting the king, to know something of the character of this important writer, and of the composition of that portion of his history with which we are immediately concerned. As so much depends on his individual judgment, it is of the utmost consequence to ascertain whether he writes with strict impartiality, or labours under a strong prejudice. Many people have been led to suppose that Josephus takes an unbiassed, if not rather a favourable, view of Herod, because it is undeniable that he does not paint him so black as he has been since painted; if we find in some places strong



denunciations of the king, there is also much said in his commendation elsewhere. This, however, is not at all owing to the historian's sense of fairness, but to his having derived the bulk of his information respecting Herod from a friendly source—that is, from Nicolaus of Damascus, whom he doubtless copied extensively without acknowledgment. It is only by a sort of accident that we have in his narrative what an impartial historian sometimes gives by design—the opposite views of a man's character, as he is delineated respectively by his friends and by his foes. Unfortunately, the great “History,” consisting of a hundred and forty-four books, written by Nicolaus has, with the exception of some fragmentary remains, long since perished, so that we cannot, by referring to it, test, in a ready manner, the accuracy and honesty of Josephus. It is further unfortunate that the authorities whom Josephus copies he seldom distinguishes from his own writings, or from one another. A recent reviewer of Professor Sayce's “Herodotus” says: “It was a common habit of Greek historians to copy from their source silently till they differed from it. Then they mentioned it, and contradicted it.” This is precisely the way in which Josephus seems to have followed Nicolaus—or, at least, that portion of his narrative which treated of King Herod's affairs—only, on several occasions, where he must certainly have dissented from Nicolaus, he did not take the requisite trouble to modify or controvert his statements. He was too careless to trim and re-shape all the constructive materials which he borrowed, so as to bring them into harmony with his own design, as would be done, under like circumstances, by a skilful modern historian. All those portions of his narrative that are favourable to Herod evidently proceeded from the pen of Nicolaus, and it is only when we

come to certain scandalous popular stories, and severe denunciations of the king, that we have an expression of his own genuine sentiments. The portrait of his royal friend, which Nicolaus painted from life, Josephus endeavoured to blacken and caricature, but so rudely, and with such little consistency, that he entirely failed to obliterate and disguise the original features, as other writers, inheriting his prejudices and improving on his work of misrepresentation, have managed to do in more recent times.

Nicolaus of Damascus was both an eminent writer and an able statesman; in fact, he and his brother Ptolemy were the principal ministers of King Herod. We are told that "his parents were distinguished no less for their personal character than for their wealth, and his father, a much esteemed orator, was not only invested with the highest magistracies in his native city, but was employed in various embassies. Nicolaus and his brother Ptolemy were instructed from their childhood in everything that was good and useful. Nicolaus, in particular, showed great talents, and, even before arriving at puberty, was reputed to be the most accomplished among the youths of his age. He composed, too, at this early period, tragedies and comedies, which met with general applause. But he soon abandoned these poetical pursuits, and devoted himself to rhetoric, music, mathematics, and the philosophy of Aristotle. Herod carried on his philosophical studies in common with Nicolaus, and the amicable relation between the two men was strengthened by these common pursuits . . . . Plutarch describes Nicolaus as possessing a tall and slender figure, with a red face. In private life, as well as in intercourse with others, he was a man of the most amiable disposition. He was modest, just, and liberal in a high degree, and,

though he disgraced himself by his flattery and partiality towards Herod, he neglected the great and powerful at Rome so much that he is censured for having preferred the society of plebeians for that of the nobles" (Smith's "Greek and Latin Biography").

Undoubtedly Nicolaus, like Virgil and many other writers of that period, was too much inclined to eulogise Augustus, yet his admiration of the emperor was genuine, and he was by no means a servile courtier, or one likely to bestow undue adulation on any lesser personage. The charge of having flattered Herod, which is mentioned to his discredit, rests entirely on the testimony of Josephus, and it is important to determine whether his own character as an historian is sufficiently high to invalidate his predecessor's trustworthiness. In his "Antiquities," he relates an absurd popular story to the effect, that Herod went with some armed followers, in the dead of the night, to rob the sepulchre of David and Solomon of its vast concealed wealth, and, being thwarted in his purpose by a miraculous fire bursting forth and killing two of his guards, he became alarmed and retreated, and built at the mouth of the sepulchre a propitiatory monument. He then goes on to say: "Even Nicolaus of Damascus makes mention of this monument built by Herod, though he says nothing about his going down into the sepulchre, as knowing that action to be discreditable to the king. And many other things he treats of in like manner in his book, for he wrote in Herod's lifetime as his minister, so as to please him, touching upon nothing but what tended to his glory, and openly excusing, or very diligently concealing, many of his notorious crimes. And as he was desirous to put a good appearance on the death of Mariamne and her sons, who were barbarously slain by the king, he tells falsehoods



about her incontinence, and makes out that her sons had treacherous designs against him. Thus he proceeds in his whole work, making a pompous encomium on whatever just actions the king had done, and earnestly vindicating or apologising for his unjust ones " (Ant., xvi. vii. 1).

On the strength of the above testimony Dean Farrar says, very incorrectly, that "Nicolaus was to Herod what Velleius Paterculus was to Tiberius." Yet he directly after says, in reference to Josephus, "His own narrative is his worst condemnation, and De Quincey's estimate of him is not too severe" (Life of Christ, vol. i. p. 66). The fact is, Dean Farrar is offended with Josephus, for precisely the same reason that the latter was offended with Nicolaus, namely, his failure to place to the discredit of Herod a monstrous legend of which he had in all probability never heard, if it was even then in existence. There is no evidence to show that Herod ever saw a single line of the narrative of contemporary events which was written by his minister, and Josephus is a very unfit person to convict him or any one else of having written falsehoods. The assertion which he makes as to Nicolaus calumniating the sons of Mariamne is directly contradicted elsewhere by his own narrative, for we find that Nicolaus, although admitting their guilt, so far from being the traducer of those young men, was in reality their friend and apologist. When they had been condemned to death by the council of Berytus, the king left the council and proceeded to Tyre, where he happened to meet with Nicolaus, who had just returned from the discharge of important business at Rome. Though the fate of his sons had now been judicially decided, he was still anxious to know the opinion of this able minister about them, and that of his other friends at Rome. Nicolaus said, in answer to his inquiries, " "Their conduct toward you was truly

impious, and you ought to keep them in prison. If further punishment should be necessary, it would be well to punish them, not under the influence of anger, but with judgment. And, if you incline to deal leniently with them, they may, perhaps, be pardoned with advantage, lest your troubles should grow worse and be rendered incurable. Such is also the opinion of most of your friends at Rome.' Herod was now silent and very thoughtful, and requested Nicolaus to sail with him " (Ant., xvii. xi. 3). It does not appear from this plain avowal of his opinion that Nicolaus was either inclined to asperse the young princes or to flatter their father. In fact, Herod and he had been accustomed to confer together almost on a footing of equality, and, however much he may have respected the king, and apologised for some of the severe acts which exposed him to obloquy, he would have been ashamed to act as a parasite and greet him with servile flattery. We have further proof that Nicolaus was not prejudiced against the sons of Mariamne, as Josephus represents him to have been, in the fact that he not only pleaded in their behalf, but bitterly assailed their elder and rival brother Antipater. Indeed, his bias was rather the other way, and the part which he took in aiding the foul conspiracy which was got up against this unfortunate prince by the Asmonean faction, although entirely approved of by Josephus, is about the most discreditable act of his life.

There is no doubt that Herod, in common with many other rulers who have had to contend with revolutionary turbulence, was eulogised by his intelligent friends, and slandered by his ignorant and irreconcilable foes. We may call to mind several able monarchs and presidents of recent times who have been extolled by their ministers and others, who knew them well and approved of their policy ;

while a large number of disaffected people, seeking unattainable objects, have loaded them with calumnies and abuse. It is not the former, but the latter—not those who are friendly and disposed to commend, but those who are hostile and inclined to censure—who invariably make the greatest deviation from truth. Mr. Moncure Conway, a distinguished American writer, referring, in a political treatise, to one of the Presidential elections, says: “Political agents have gone through the country with buckets of tar, as it were, and with commands to blacken the character of every antagonist.” In these great quadrennial contests beyond the Atlantic, tremendous falsehoods are published on both sides, not for the purpose of unduly praising the respective candidates that are put in nomination, but to disparage as much as possible and damage the prospects of their rivals—it being well known that slander obtains a much more ready credence than flattery with the prejudiced multitude. Such has been the rule of unscrupulous political agents in every age, and, considering the amount of race hatred and religious bigotry arrayed against Herod, to say nothing of the Asmonean jealousy—all of which Josephus shared—it was inevitable that his character should be more falsified by defamation than by eulogy. Indeed, we may see a good indication of this in the two versions which were told in explanation of the marble monument which he placed at the tomb of David and Solomon. Herod, on several occasions, showed respect for the dead; and in the story of Nicolaus, that he erected a memorial to the most renowned of his royal predecessors, as he also erected memorials to his own relatives, there is, probably, no exaggeration at all, nor any attempt at suppression. The later story, preferred by Josephus, which represents that he erected the monument to propitiate the divine ven-

geance after being foiled in his felonious purpose and driven from the spot by a supernatural fire, is in the very face of it, a calumnious legend—just such a legend as the Jerusalem populace would be likely to picture to themselves after his death; for there are many known instances in which the original purpose of monuments has been falsified by local tradition.

If Josephus had been, what he professed to be, an impartial historian, desirous always to state the exact truth, he would have shown just as much solicitude to clear Herod's character from calumny as to divest it of flattery. Indeed, under all the circumstances of the case, it was of the former, rather than of the latter, than he ought to have entertained a guarded suspicion. When, however, we see him give a distrustful ear to the king's educated friends, and a credulous ear to his ignorant foes, it is impossible to place any reliance in his own profession of impartiality. He is, clearly, not a judge, but a prejudiced advocate; and, while censuring Nicolaus for being one-sided and overstating the case in Herod's favour, he shows himself an unmistakable disposition to deviate still further from the truth in the opposite direction. It must be borne in mind, too, that the charge of flattery which he makes against Nicolaus has been repeatedly made against himself, and with more reason, in respect to the high encomiums which he bestows on his distinguished Roman patrons, and on Herod Agrippa. Admitting that Nicolaus was a partisan writer, and too much inclined to embellish the character of a sovereign to whom he was very sincerely attached, Josephus was, certainly, not the man qualified to cast a stone at him. This highly conceited and disputatious historian declares himself a member of the Pharisee sect, and to no other Pharisee was the Gospel saying about be-



holding the mote in a brother's eye, and not perceiving the beam in one's own eye, more entirely applicable.

While Josephus accuses Nicolaus in general terms of flattering Herod, he does not convict him in a single instance of inventing fables for that purpose, or of making any deliberate perversion of the truth. One definite charge is brought against him; he is said to have affirmed "that Antipater was of the stock of the principal Jews who came from Babylon in order to gratify his son, Herod" (*Ant.*, xiv. i. 3). Antipater and Antipas, the father and grandfather of Herod, were both well-known Idumeans; but, as there had been a considerable amount of migration and intercourse between the two races, it might have been thought quite possible that they were Idumeans of Jewish descent. There was, at all events, an inviting field for genealogical conjecture with respect to the origin of a family which had attained sovereign power in Judea, and it is not surprising that some of Herod's partisans should have inclined to the belief that his ancestors were of the stock of Israel, since, the wider that belief obtained, the less powerful would be the prejudice against him on the score of inferior birth. We have, however, no reason to suspect that Herod himself ever helped to propagate the belief in his Jewish descent, nor is it probable that Nicolaus, in his history, mentioned it as being anything more than a belief. There is, certainly, no portion of the historical writings of Josephus more natural and truthful in appearance than that respecting the life and acts of Herod, which, we can see from internal evidence, he must have transcribed directly from the great work of Nicolaus. A variety of incidents are mentioned as occurring during Herod's reign in Jerusalem and other places, and in connexion with his campaigns

which strike us as being at once singular, and also perfectly natural, and in harmony with the times. We feel confident that the scenes described with so much graphic simplicity were not imagined, but actually witnessed; they have all the reality about them which we are accustomed to value so highly in the sketches of a modern correspondent of the daily press.

Many other portions of the extensive history of Josephus abound in extravagant things, and are of a far less trustworthy character. Writing, for instance, of the terrible force of the Roman catapults at the siege of Jotapata, where he was present as an eye-witness, he says: "Some notion may be formed of the power of the engine from the events of that night. For one of those who stood near Josephus on the ramparts, being struck by a stone, his head was torn completely off, and flung as far as three furlongs. In the day-time, too, a woman with child, who had just come out of a house, had her belly so violently struck that the unborn infant was hurled to the distance of half a furlong, so great was the force of the ballista" (War, III. vii. 23). No such extraordinary things as these are reported as having come under the observation of Nicolaus. When Josephus tells us of the achievements of ancient Jewish leaders and kings, we at once perceive from what books he derived his information, but know nothing of the authors of those books, nor how they obtained their information. With regard to some of the sections of his "Antiquities," there is still more uncertainty: we are not able to trace the reports a single step towards the source from which they originated. How, for instance, did he get his account of the great war which Moses carried on against the Ethiopians? (Ant. II. x.). Since he professed to receive divine intimations in dreams (Life 42), and also claimed the power to

foretell future events (*War*, III. viii. 9), it is probable that, in common with many other prophets, he believed that his inspiration enabled him to reveal, not only the hidden future, but the forgotten past. The trust, however, which we are able to repose in him as an accurate narrator of events is in the inverse proportion to the confidence which he has in himself; and, when he thus wrote under a sense of being inspired to record what had taken place long before, independently of human authorities, he ought clearly to have adopted the vocation of a poet, and not that of an historian. He boasts of being more truthful than other writers, but on comparing the story of his "Life" with that portion of the "*War*," which covers the same period, we find a number of discrepancies which as they cannot be ascribed to mere failure of memory, clearly convict him of writing at times as his humour dictated, with an utter disregard for historical truth (*Life*, 6, 17, 30; *War*, II. xviii. 3; xxi. 5, 6).

In transcribing freely from the History of Nicolaus, it might be supposed that Josephus would not venture in any instance to falsify the meaning of that writer, from the knowledge that many copies of the work were then likely to be in existence, so that inquiring people would soon be able to convict him of any inaccuracy. But he was under the same check in copying from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, and is, nevertheless, seen to have taken considerable liberty in dealing with some portions of that narrative, both in the way of suppression and embellishment. There is good reason to believe that he copied Nicolaus fairly, on the whole, and that more from carelessness than design; but, being strongly prejudiced against Herod, he would be likely to do injustice to some of the king's repressive acts by the omission of qualifying circumstances, just as several modern

writers have done in following his own history. On comparing the story of the "War" with that of the "Antiquities," which treats of the same period, we find that some of the "crimes" of which Herod is accused are reported more fully and more fairly in one narrative than in the other, so as to assume in consequence quite a different complexion (War, i. xxii. 2, 5; Ant., xv. iii. 3, 9). Seeing thus that the historian, like an untruthful witness in a court of justice, does not adhere strictly to one unvarnished tale, but gives more and less favourable versions at different times, it is highly probable that both narratives, taken together, furnish, in certain instances, but a very poor and incomplete account of what actually took place, as set forth in the original history of Nicolaus.

It must be borne in mind that Nicolaus was all along a consistent Imperialist; he stood up strongly for the Jews' religious privileges, but was firmly convinced that they could no longer maintain the position of an independent nation, and that their welfare would be best secured by their constituting, with the other inhabitants of Palestine, a tributary state under Roman protection. Josephus, on the other hand, commenced his career as an ardent Nationalist, and, at the head of an insurgent force, fought against the Romans for some time in the province of Galilee. But he became at length convinced of the hopelessness of the struggle in which they were engaged, and, on being made prisoner at the siege of Jotapata, obtained good treatment from Vespasian by earnestly persuading his infatuated countrymen to rely on the Roman mercy, as he himself had done, and lay down their arms. In consequence of taking this politic course, and being converted, as it were, to Imperialism, he was denounced by those who continued to defend the Nationalist cause as a traitor



and a renegade; and he evidently smarted under this charge, and in his subsequent writings manifested a strong desire to conciliate Jewish opinion. A similar line of conduct was pursued in the last century by certain Irish Nationalists, when they obtained lucrative appointments under the British Government. On finding themselves accused by the more uncompromising agitators of deserting the Irish cause, they were goaded, in some instances, to attempt to regain their patriotic reputation by writing vehement articles or essays on the past wrongs of Ireland. In short, they endeavoured to trim and stand well with both parties by extolling the living English statesmen who befriended them, and denouncing with more than ordinary bitterness those who maintained the union of the two countries in former times. Such was the judicious and safe course pursued by Josephus; he was careful to say nothing against his Roman patrons, or against King Agrippa, who fought on their side; and at the same time he sought to keep in with his disaffected countrymen by taking part with a past generation of rebels, and bravely denouncing all the acts of tyranny and barbarity that had been ascribed to Herod the Great.

Under the heading of "Out-Heroding Herod," a satirical High Church reviewer has done his best to tar and feather this book in such a way that no one shall be induced to make its acquaintance. He even charges the author with practising as a controversialist the same mendacious trickery—says, for instance, that in the first place, he "blackens Josephus" for the purpose of invalidating his testimony. Unprejudiced readers of the foregoing remarks will not endorse this statement; they will see and admit that the Jewish historian blackens himself. His literary industry, and the vast amount of information which he gathered from

one source and another for the benefit of posterity deserve grateful recognition, but we know that he was a bigoted partisan writer, that he made very different statements at different times, and it is quite clear to any one who is not mentally blinded that many of his allegations are disentitled to credibility. Under the heading of "Whitewashing Herod," another hostile critic, with a better sense of fairness and honesty, says: "Our author's method from first to last we consider seriously and radically at fault. He found it necessary to draw largely upon Josephus. But Josephus is a great witness against Herod. Accordingly Josephus is defamed, and then—thus handicapped—put in evidence. Mr. Vickers breaks down a bridge which yet he needs to pass over; and certainly the charity that can take Herod to its bosom, should now do something towards putting Josephus again on his feet."

The reviewer's metaphor of breaking down a bridge which one yet needs to pass over, is here wholly inapplicable, otherwise Josephus might be said to do this very thing when he questions the accuracy of his predecessor, Nicolaus of Damascus. In giving the particulars of Herod's reign he found it necessary to draw largely upon Nicolaus, who is a great witness in favour of the king. Accordingly the credibility of Nicolaus is impugned, and he is then put in evidence. A modern investigator, however, is not wholly dependent on the testimony of either of these rival historians; he can compare them one against the other and judge of their relative truthfulness. It is generally easy enough to see what portion of the narrative of Josephus is copied from Nicolaus, and what is derived from other sources, and those who are free from prejudice can hardly fail to admit that the former is in appearance the most natural, consistent and worthy of credit. Josephus was probably not more unscrupulous in

his statements than the majority of writers who professed to give a faithful record of occurrences at that period. His rival, Justus of Tiberias, charged him with asserting what was untrue in reference to recent events in Galilee. In reply to this accusation he declared that it was Justus who was guilty of falsehood. "I have a mind to say a few things to Justus, who has himself written a history concerning these affairs, and also to others who profess to write history without caring to be correct, and are induced, from ill-will or good-will to some persons, to write falsehoods. These men do like those who compose forged deeds and conveyances, and because they are not brought to like punishment with such people, they have no regard for truth" (Life, 65). Josephus was certainly not one of the few who rose superior to these common practices of the time which he condemns. Unfortunately the writings of Justus have not been preserved, so that we may compare the conflicting accounts, but if his narrative was of no higher character than that of his accuser, the dispute between the rival Jewish historians was only a pot-and-kettle recrimination.

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One hostile reviewer of this history complains of its being too much composed of special pleading, which would be reasonable enough if all other writings about Herod had been marked by judicial impartiality. He brings the indictment which he advances against it to the following conclusion: "The truth to us seems to be, that in his younger days Herod was not a badly disposed man, but he was excessively ambitious of place and power, and he had a soldier's ability and enough strength of will to win what he desired. He was prepared to wade through slaughter to a throne rather than miss his aim, and opposition rousing his worst passions

he gradually grew into the monster he was in his later days, when neither the ties of blood nor the moral principles he professed to estimate so highly restrained him. The fact is, that a man cannot devote himself to ambition without becoming less human and constantly less answerable to his conscience; it is essentially and intensely selfishness on a large scale, and he who serves that must sacrifice his humanity. Herod did that and paid the penalty, and so made his name one of the worst in history."

This opponent is entitled to much respect, for he writes like a serious, earnest, religious man, and not as a literary buffoon who thinks that any argument in defence of Herod may be overthrown by spurting at it an effusion of fun and ridicule. He fails, however, to distinguish clearly honourable ambition from unscrupulous aggressiveness, and does not seem to understand correctly the position of the elected king of Judea. We are told that Herod has such a bad name throughout the world, not in consequence of being maligned, but because he "was excessively ambitious of place and power," and was "prepared to wade through slaughter to a throne." But is it a fact that rulers who are culpable in this respect generally earn for themselves the execration of posterity? What about King David, Alexander of Macedon, William of Normandy, Frederick of Prussia, Napoleon, and many others? These were all more or less self-seeking adventurers, grasping at power and dominion without much respect for the rights of their neighbours, and wholly indifferent to the immense sacrifice of human life which the attainment of their objects required. Yet it is only a comparatively few stern moralists who now condemn their conduct; the world in general looks with admiration on their achievements, and considers them justly entitled to honour and renown.



On the other hand, Herod, who for so many centuries has been held up to odium, was really quite a different character, and, in point of aggressiveness, altogether free from their guilt. He was neither a usurper nor a great marauder, "wading through slaughter to a throne rather than miss his aim," any more than the present Viceroy of India can be so considered. Every step of his advancement was obtained by honourable promotion, and when he fought it was as a law-abiding constable, to maintain the world's peace, under the sanction of a higher authority, and not as a lawless conqueror. There is not a single recorded instance of his having ever encroached on the rights of his neighbours, or taken up arms selfishly merely for the purpose of territorial aggrandisement. His dominions were enlarged from time to time, not by his own violence and rapacity, but through additional provinces being given him by Cæsar as a reward for good government.

Herod certainly had his faults, as well as David, Solomon, and a hundred other famous rulers of antiquity, and he occasionally inflicted some wrong; but, while the misdeeds of his great predecessors on the throne of Judea have been generally treated with the utmost tenderness, his own reprehensible acts have been enormously exaggerated. And those modern writers who continue to improve on Josephus, in skilfully blackening his character, seem to be quite incapable of perceiving or admitting that he possessed a single redeeming virtue, or that he ever conferred any benefit on mankind. In reality, the good which he was constantly effecting, by the preservation of order in the various provinces of Palestine, immensely outweighed whatever harm or wrong he occasionally inflicted in the punishment of individuals who were falsely accused. Judging from the profound tranquillity which he

maintained during the greater portion of his long reign, and from the terrible commotions and destructive wars which broke out after his death, he may be safely credited with having saved at least a million of human lives. In order to conserve in this way the life of the nation, it was necessary that he should slay from time to time a few pestilent people, and, in doing so, he may have cut now and then from error of judgment a trifle too deep, just as a surgeon may do in treating an individual who is suffering from gangrene or snake-bite. He was by no means a complete master of his household, nor a wise and discriminating judge; he gave a too ready ear to mischievous tale-bearers, and on their testimony condemned some innocent persons to death. But, considering the age in which he lived, the people that he had to rule, and his trying position at the head of a large and quarrelsome polygamous family, some of the members of which were in league with his enemies, it cannot be made out that he was more severe in repressing disorder and punishing crime than other able rulers have been under circumstances of corresponding difficulty; and he certainly did not take people's lives criminally, or merely to gratify his own selfish passions, as was done by such sanguinary coxcombs as Nero and Caligula. Indeed, had he not been on the whole a just ruler, and so managed to win the respect and confidence of Augustus Cæsar, the Roman Senate, and a majority of the population of Palestine, the necessary power to subdue fanatical and turbulent sections would have soon fallen away from him, and he would have experienced himself an ignominious suppression.

Before we incriminate people, whether princes or peasants, for shedding blood under strong provocation, we ought to place ourselves as nearly as we can in the same trying position. It is not usual

to brand as a murderer the honest soldier who strikes down his foes on the field of battle where his own life is constantly threatened and he is contending bravely in behalf of his country. But when peace is restored and the same man, living under the protection of the law, goes and kills an unguarded neighbour whom he has no reason to fear, he will be rightly held guilty of an atrocious crime. It must be remembered that Herod was a soldier, whose feelings would necessarily be hardened to some extent by encountering persistent hostility, yet at the fall of Jerusalem he strenuously exerted himself to stay the vindictive carnage, and reproached his Roman comrades for shedding blood unnecessarily. After that crowning success, the majority of those who fought under him could return, if they chose, to peaceful pursuits, and rest in the utmost tranquillity. There was, however, no peace and no soothing quiet for him; the throne which he had gained was not a chair of ease, but a sentry-box, where he had to stand on guard and maintain a stern watch in the face of implacable enemies. His position was still that of a worried combatant; he could only have safety by striking down from time to time certain dangerous people who were hatching rebellion and lying in wait to take his own life. He continued all along to fight in the spirit of a brave soldier, not decimating opponents in savage wantonness, but killing those who were believed to be intent on killing him, even if they were members of his household. It was his fixed purpose to punish only such as were guilty, but, unfortunately, he was in some instances misled by the testimony of lying wretches to pass condemnation on the innocent. If he thus unintentionally perpetrated judicial wrongs he ought to be commiserated rather than blamed; it is the knaves who wickedly forged the

incriminating evidence on which he relied that deserve to be held up to reprobation for cruelty. His Asmonean relatives and half-Asmonean sons were all more or less disloyal towards him—tools of the faction which desired the overthrow of his government. Prince Antipater, his eldest son, was truly loyal, and altogether innocent in respect to the absurd charge of parricide for which he was tried and condemned; the guilt of the infamous plot to cut off, as it were, the king's right arm in his declining years, rests with his crafty Judean enemies.

In order to understand correctly the position of Herod and his character as a ruler, it must be borne in mind that his subjects were very far from being a homogeneous people; they consisted mainly of five races—Jews, Idumeans, Samaritans, Syrians, and Greeks. It was his duty to govern these races impartially, and bring them as much as possible to renounce their old jealousies, and stand together in political friendship as a united commonwealth. He accomplished this task probably better than any other man of that age could have done, and succeeded in contenting all the people who were placed under his authority, with the exception of one irreconcilable faction—the Jewish Nationalists. These turbulent and troublesome subjects resembled in many respects our own Irish Nationalists; they had much more regard for the patriotic priest, who encouraged their visionary aspirations, than for the magistrate who held them to the common duties and obligations of life, and it was impossible for the most upright ruler in the world to content them, since what they really wanted was not justice, but injustice. No people had benefited more than the Jews from the extension of the Roman empire in the East, and none were more hostile towards it, and desirous of effecting its



overthrow. While they were allowed to settle in the various Mediterranean countries under Cæsar's rule, to their very great advantage, and enjoy the free exercise of their religion, they were not willing to reciprocate this toleration, and would have liked to rob and expel all Gentiles from the soil of Palestine, of which they claimed the exclusive possession. Herod refused to favour these prejudiced people, or humour them in their unreasonable demands, and, therefore, was hated and maligned. Had he, like the Maccabees, put himself at the head of an intolerant host, and carried desolation into all the neighbouring countries, they would have been loud in his commendation. The Jewish Nationalists, followed by Judaising Christians, who traduced the character of Herod, are precisely the same people who calumniated St. Paul, and chiefly for the same reason—the king, like the apostle, withstood their inveterate race-prejudice, and laboured earnestly to break down the old barrier of exclusiveness, which prevented them from entering into political and religious fellowship with the rest of mankind.

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When a man is put on his trial for very grave charges it is of the utmost importance that there should be found for their consideration an impartial jury. Great pains are taken at our courts of justice to secure this object; a biassed person is deemed ineligible for jurorship, and if strong local prejudice is known to exist, there is, in consequence, a change of venue; the trial is conducted in some other part of the country. If Herod could reappear among us to answer at the bar for what is alleged against him, there would be no possibility of finding a dozen men in any city competent to judge him with impartiality. It would be useless to ask people to be “uninfluenced

by what they have read in the papers," and a change of venue in his case would be quite out of the question. In estimating his character, as we are now attempting to do historically, all that can be hoped for is that a few widely-scattered individuals will be capable of considering with a free mind the various things alleged to his hurt. It may be safely said that during his lifetime, and since, he has suffered more from unreasonable prejudice than any other man mentioned in history. There is no magic wand to dispel quickly this terrible hostility that has grown for centuries, and gathered about his name; but a few words may be said for the purpose of explaining it, and rendering it more intelligible. In the first place, the fortune of Idumean birth, the fact of his belonging to another race, served to render him odious. A recent writer, Mr. Morrison, says: "It was sufficient that Herod was one of the hated children of Edom to ensure him being detested by the Jews; no services of his could possibly wipe out that stain. It would have proved fatal to the popularity of any prince however excellent. . . . It has to be conceded that his government was not based on the people's will, but it has likewise to be remembered that the Jews had proved in the most glaring manner their total incapacity to govern themselves, and their choice actually lay not between despotism and self-government, but between despotism and anarchy" (The Jews under Roman Rule, p. 85).

There is always much to be said in excuse of the disaffection manifested by a people who are forced against their will to live under a foreign yoke. When the Romans invaded this country they were not wanted here, nobody invited them, so that the native Britons had good reason to resist their invasion and fight stoutly to continue a free people. It cannot, however, be said that the Jews at the



same period were in an equally independent position, and then conquered in like manner by an intruding Roman host. So far from being well able to shift for themselves, they were always inviting some foreign Power to assist them in their difficulties, and when help was actually rendered would not consider themselves under the slightest obligation for the accepted service. Their relationship with Rome was certainly not in its origin a Sabine marriage, but an advantageous alliance of their own seeking; and they did not live honestly and faithfully up to its requirements. They resembled a certain class of unreasonable women who, if they succeed in getting good husbands, want to treat them as tools rather than as partners, and while in many ways dependent on them, presume to act as though they were quite independent.

The union of Judea and Idumea was an alliance of the Jews' own making, but they did not act under it equitably as they ought to have done. The two countries became banded together for increased strength, like England and Scotland, and the Idumeans deserved such fair treatment and consideration from the Jews as the Scotch have received from the English. No jealousy would be felt in this country of a brave and talented man born north of the Tweed becoming Prime Minister, or rising in a military capacity to have the chief command of the Army. We should honour the sister nation that could furnish sons capable of filling creditably the highest offices of state, and thus promoting in various ways our common public welfare. The Jews, too, ought to have felt proud of Idumea for her gifts of men, especially for enabling them to have at the head of their forces such an able commander as Antipater. But so strongly were they infected with race prejudice that his well-merited promotion was a grievance to them, and some of

his Judean rivals would not rest content till they had secretly compassed his destruction. He was a brave and honourable man; he won his position entirely by merit, and he was treacherously murdered for no other fault than that of being an Idumean. Having killed Antipater, the Jews did their utmost to remove his son, Herod, by violence for the same reason, but failed in the attempt, because, warned by his father's fate, he was well prepared for their assaults; and he turned round eventually and slew some of them. In consequence of meeting his enemies with stern retaliatory force, he has been accused ever since of terrible crimes, while nothing whatever is said about their provocation. Supposing it to be more clearly made out than hitherto, that some of his punitive measures were of the nature of crimes, who must be considered the aggressors? who began the war of criminality?

The early Christians had very little of the race prejudice which existed in Judea, and were not at all likely to hate a man on account of his being an Idumean. But, being a communistic brotherhood, they were influenced by another strong prejudice, that is, the dislike which is generally felt by people thus living in equality towards men in a dominant position. They imagined, too, that rulers were persecutors; they were accustomed to look on all earthly potentates as feudatories of Satan at deadly war with the kingdom of Christ. The apostle Paul was to a great extent free from this misapprehension, but it sadly infected the majority of Christians in all countries, till a change in their sentiments was at length brought about by the conversion of Constantine. In the Christian writings of the first and second centuries, kings, proconsuls, and other rulers are seldom spoken of with respect, and it is not at all surprising that the Evangelists

should give a bad account of Herod and his descendants. They were sure to hear the members of this distinguished family disparaged by many Jews, and with their anti-regal bias would be disposed to believe any outrageous report which tended to their discredit. Consequently the Herods, as delineated by them with the utmost religious sincerity, are men of terrible character; they are, in fact, nothing less than a family of murderers. In reading their prejudiced reports we must take into consideration their social theories and their surroundings, or the way in which their minds would be affected by living in an anti-Herodian atmosphere.

The Jews, who were subject to Herod, hated him intensely from race prejudice; the early Christians, without knowing much of his life and acts, disliked him from ruler-prejudice; people will now be heard to say that they are not warped by either of these sentiments, and that they condemn the man simply for his crimes. But in reality their minds, which they believe to be free, are dominated by the prejudices of his enemies who long ago delivered their calumnious reports. In our modern political contests, such an opinion will sometimes be expressed of a Parliamentary candidate by a person who fancies himself quite free from bias. A simple-minded citizen will declare that he is no politician, that he entertains a very good opinion of both parties, but is determined not to vote for Johnson on account of his being such a rascal. We find out presently, however, that he has no proof of this beyond what he heard the other evening at the Mermaid inn—one of the chief resorts of Johnson's political adversaries—where nothing but defamation of his character could be expected. There is nearly as much simplicity manifested by those who believe in Herod's enormous wickedness from no other evidence than that of stories told long ago by the prejudiced politicians of Palestine.

Many millions of people throughout the world are now regularly taught in early life that at the time of Christ's birth Herod was King of the Jews, but they are taught nothing whatever about him, or what he did in his regal capacity excepting that he slew many infants at Bethlehem, hoping thereby to destroy Christ. There is thus stamped on their minds a lasting impression of his unparalleled wickedness and cruelty; they are accustomed to consider him a perfect monster, much more a devil than a man. A small fraction of those who are so instructed and biassed—perhaps one in five thousand—will in their mature years get further information respecting Herod from the pages of Josephus. Some few will thus speedily acquire a more favourable impression of the king; but the majority will be quite unable to free themselves from the belief in his diabolical character. Seeing no mention of the Massacre of the Bethlehemites, they ascribe this significant omission not to the historian's ignorance of such a tragedy, but to his astonishing negligence or forgetfulness to place it on record. They observe, however, other black stories which seem quite in keeping with the alleged massacre if they do not actually lend it support. All the crimes and intended crimes which Josephus ascribes to the king are, in their eyes, entirely credible, and just what might be expected of such a cruel oppressor. But there are certain things placed to his account which are so out of character for him that they cannot help entertaining a suspicion of their being fictitious. They see it represented that on certain occasions he was very generous and benevolent, and they question the possibility of there being a spark of kind feeling in his breast. It looks like legend to them, this attaching of good deeds to a blood-thirsty tyrant, and they are perhaps reminded of the story of the Roman wolf giving suck to twin



children, when, had such infants really been at the mercy of the beast, they would naturally have soon been devoured. Some biassed readers of Josephus will admit, however, that Herod really made a profession of piety and a show of generosity from time to time as reported ; but they contend that all which he did in this way was for a bad purpose. They will assure you that the Devil has been known to preach occasionally, and even give alms for the furtherance of some foul design, and they are inclined to think that Herod came nearer in character than any other bad man to the terrible Prince of darkness. It is useless to reason with such people ; argument is quite thrown away upon them. Those who are untrammelled, however, must see that the best English rulers would be made to appear diabolical as well as Herod, if subjected to the same outrageous historical treatment, so that their evil deeds, or preferably the blackest calumnies circulated about them, should obtain an immense publicity throughout the world, while their good works should be kept in apocryphal privacy, and only become known to a few investigators.

Other hated persons besides Herod have been accused without reason of the infernal crime of infant-killing. During the Middle Ages the Jews were continually charged with venting their malevolent rage against Christ, who was inaccessible to them, by slaying innocent children who came within their reach. In England, France, Spain, and Germany a number of children, supposed to have been martyred in this way, were enrolled among the saints, and their relics, being placed in holy shrines, became to thousands of people objects of pious pilgrimage. Many Jews were brought to trial and punished capitally for these alleged murders ; some when under torture made confessions of guilt ; so that there is a much more substantial basis of



evidence to render them credible than can be furnished for the massacre of the Bethlehemite children, of which there is no mention made but by a single writer long after Herod's death. When, however, the Jews had suffered much judicial wrong on account of these terrible charges, it became apparent that the incriminating evidence directed against them was of a fictitious character, got up by unscrupulous people who only wanted an excuse to plunder them or get released from paying their debts. Both priests and magistrates were repeatedly imposed upon by such evidence, but they learnt at length to distrust it, and unreasonable accusations of bloodguiltiness were in consequence less and less frequent; the Jews were admitted after awhile to be human and not diabolical.

It must be said to their credit, that enlightened Christian ministers have probably done more than any other modern teachers to clear the Jews from the calumnious charges directed against them in mediæval times. To act consistently they ought now to plead for the more maligned Herod, and they have the requisite moral courage to be foremost in his vindication. The unknown author of the introduction to St. Matthew's Gospel may have been a good, devout man, but credulous and mistaken, as were Thomas of Monmouth, Matthew Paris, and other reporters of child-martyrdoms, accompanied by wonders and signs, in the Crusading period. A Scriptural legend, though commanding greater respect as poetry, can have no more weight as evidence than any other religious legend for convicting people of preternatural crimes. But Dean Farrar and other eminent scholars are not at all consistent in dealing with unhistorical accusations which are presented to us in different portions of Scripture. They will freely admit that the grave charges of cruelty which the author of Daniel ad-

vances against Nebuchadnezzar are not to be taken into account in any modern estimate of the character of the Chaldean monarch. To Herod however, they apply another rule ; whatever may have been said to his discredit in ancient Scriptural fiction must now be accepted as historical fact. Why should the good Temple builder not receive at their hands as fair judicial treatment as the ruthless Temple destroyer ?

Many readers of the New Testament, and, perhaps the majority of them, have come to entertain the notion that there was but one Herod, and he the great proto-persecutor of Christianity. They see it stated in the second chapter of Matthew that "Herod the king" slew all the children in Bethlehem from two years old and under in the hope of thereby destroying the infant Christ. In the sixth chapter of Mark it is affirmed that "king Herod" imprisoned John the Baptist, the friend of Christ, and afterwards put him to death. In the account of the trial of Jesus, furnished by Luke, it is represented that "Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a purple robe" (xxiii. 11). The same writer—now considered the least reliable of the Synoptics—says elsewhere that "Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church, and he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword" (Acts xii. 1, 2). We are further told that he imprisoned Peter, and how there presently came an angel, who, breaking bars, bolts, and chains, gave Peter deliverance. The cruel tyrant now, fighting against the power of the angel, commanded that the keepers of the prison should be put to death for their ineffectual resistance. He was at length, however, vanquished himself, for the angel smote him in the midst of his pomp and splendour so that he gave up the ghost,

and was eaten of worms. These terrible evangelic traditions have served to render the name of Herod abhorrent throughout the world, but, like the charges made against Nebuchadnezzar in the Book of Daniel, they are not really history, but poetic legends added to history, and can have no weight as evidence of bloodguiltiness. If it could be made out that Herod's son, Antipas, and grandson, Agrippa—to whom his own name has been attached—were cruel persecutors, it would not affect his character; there is, however, no reason to believe that they were less tolerant than himself. Supposing that Antipas really had John the Baptist put to death, as we are told by the Evangelists and also by Josephus, it would hardly have been on account of his religion that he suffered, for John was an Essene, or at least connected with the Essene school, and the father of Antipas greatly respected that community. Possibly John may have been punished on the strength of some false charge got up against him which imposed on the tetrarch, or in consequence of excesses committed by his followers. The reasons assigned for his punishment are wholly inadequate and likewise conflicting. Josephus says he was slain on account of his great oratorical power, which Antipas feared he would so use as to incite the multitude to sedition (*Ant.* xviii. v. 2). It is a most extraordinary thing that a preacher of righteousness should be put to death just because he was an effective speaker, and might possibly in the future speak to a mischievous purpose. But equally strange is the account of the Evangelists as to what led to John's execution. They tell us that Antipas was so charmed with the dancing of a young girl that he promised to give her whatever she might ask of him unto the half of his kingdom (*Mark* vi. 23). This seems to be copied from the

older story of Ahasuerus promising to give Esther whatever she should ask of him to the half of the kingdom (Esther v. 3-5). It is intelligible enough as a creation of fancy, but it cannot be historical, for if Antipas had made such an extravagant promise his sensible friends would have deemed him stark mad. And supposing the damsel to have actually asked for the head of John the Baptist, the tetrarch would not have been obliged "for his oath's sake" to grant her unreasonable request; he might have been expected to say, "John is a good man, and his head is not mine to give." Canon Cheyne says, "That the tetrarch considered him a dangerous demagogue (*Ant.*, xviii. v. 2) was hardly the whole reason for John's arrest and subsequent execution in the fortress of Machærus. There was probably some personal offence as well, though the story told in the primitive tradition (*Matt.* xiv. 3-10, *Mark* vi. 16-27) is not free from chronological and other difficulties, and may be merely what a later generation (accustomed to think of John as a second Elijah) substituted for history" ("*Encyclopædia Biblica*," vol. ii., 2,500).

In an article of the above work on the Gospels, it is said "Mark and Matthew show traces of duplicate traditions concerning the insults offered to Jesus in the Passion, and these combined with the Psalmist's prediction, 'The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his Christ' (*Acts* iv. 26), may have led Luke to adopt a tradition—not mentioned by the other Evangelists—that Herod joined with Pilate to persecute Christ" (*Ibid.* 1,793). Luke's portraying of Herod Agrippa as a persecuting monster, and pitting him in deadly combat with an angel, is clearly a piece of fiction introduced as embellishment to historical fact (*Ant.*, xix. viii. 2). According to the testimony of Josephus, the detractor of



his grandfather, "Agrippa was of a mild disposition, and equally liberal to all men; he was humane to foreigners, and they were sensible of his liberality; he was of a gentle and compassionate nature" (xix. vii. 3). There are several other statements about him in this Jewish history which make it clear that whatever his faults may have been in regard to extravagant expenditure, he was one of the most clement and generous of rulers, and about the last man in the world to think of persecuting anybody for his religion.

It is really unfortunate that Luke and other Christian writers should so have mistaken the Herods and pictured them as persecuting enemies when there was good reason to consider these rulers the friends of religious reformation. Paul would have understood them far better, and in all probability would have had amicable relations with every one, could he have made their acquaintance. They were no less desirous than he to break down the barrier of priestly exclusiveness, and thus enable Jews to widen their sympathies and enter into fellowship with Gentiles. It is monstrous to stigmatise men continually in our churches, and hold them up to reprobation as cruel persecutors, when they were in reality civilising peacemakers. Many prejudiced people believe that if Herod the Great had lived later and occupied the position of his grandson, he would not have been content to "stretch forth his hand to vex certain of the church," but would have done his utmost to destroy the church by a general massacre. Setting fables aside, why should he be expected to engage in such devilishness entirely inconsistent with his tolerant principles and the whole course of his religious life? Is it reasonable that a brave man, worried by wild beasts which are thirsting for his blood, should go and attack by preference a harmless flock of sheep?



We know that Herod had a very high opinion of the Essenes, and though they gave him no military assistance and refused to take the oath of allegiance to him, he respected their religious scruples, and did not hurt a hair of their heads. If the Christians with kindred sentiments had appeared a little earlier, he would not have been likely to embrace all their doctrines, but would have equally esteemed their piety and the purity of their lives, and counted on them as a friendly force. Throughout his whole career he persistently fought against bad men and defended good men, as a valorous knight might be expected to do, and yet has been caricatured for so many centuries as a dragon! It is true that when worn and incapacitated by age, he was deceived occasionally by lying enemies, and induced to commit some judicial wrong; but the evil was not in his own heart; he intended and wished to act equitably. Though misled to some extent by the intricate labyrinths of trickery constructed by knaves, when a case was clear, open, and indisputable, he gave a righteous decision, and if he had been present at the glaring mockery of justice which the Evangelists report, he would certainly have saved Christ and slain Barabbas.

The Rev. Henry Solly, in the introduction to his drama "Herod the Great" (Kegan Paul), says, "When every deduction from Herod's real greatness and moral worth is fully and fairly made, with just allowance for the violent prejudice of the historian, from whom most of the worst stories concerning him are derived, there remains ample evidence that in this man were largely combined many of the grandest moral and intellectual elements ever manifested, while always needed, in the true ruler, teacher, and protector of communities. His work was in many respects wonderfully

fine and effectual—done, moreover, in the midst of such fearful hindrances, such seething disorder, wickedness, and crime, persistent deadly hostility, public and private, against himself, as few other rulers have had to encounter; while the beneficent results of that work lasted not only throughout his reign of forty years, but for full seventy years after his death. They were terminated only with the total destruction of the Jewish local polity by the Romans and the expulsion of the Jewish nation from Palestine. That this illustrious king was not the Man long foretold by prophet, patriot, and sage, the promised Deliverer, the Ruler of the Kingdom of God, who, in the fulness of time should come into the world, was sufficiently obvious at length to his most ardent admirers as it was to himself. But it would be well if even now it were recognised by those who have too long been blinded to the actual facts of his history, character, and work, that this man, in the order of Providence, was raised up and endowed with the needful gifts for preparing the way of the Lord, the advent of the Son of God, the Deliverer and King, the Desire of all nations. The world has not been rich enough in men so truly great as Herod, King of Judea, that it can afford to consign his memory any longer to undiscerning detestation or ignorant neglect” (pp. xiv. xv.).

This enlightened appreciation of the great Idumean in the face of the protracted hostility of the churches is highly creditable on the part of Mr. Solly, and we may reasonably hope that other thoughtful ministers will be influenced by his example. There seems to us not sufficient ground for pointing to Herod as a precursor of Christ, but he was certainly on friendly terms with the Essenes, and also with Hillel, and he, more than any other man of his time, anticipated the spirit of modern cultured Christianity. It must be confessed that

the writer of this History is very lightly equipped in respect to doctrine; instead of being burdened with the Thirty-nine Articles, he only takes with him the Two Great Commandments. Consequently he is able to speak in defence of Herod, and in disparagement of his prejudiced accusers, both Jewish and Christian, with an amount of freedom which is denied to many abler men who have to move in conventional enthrallment on orthodox lines. His having no dependent congregation to humour and hold together in harmonious fellowship is an additional advantage for going forward beyond the ordinary doctrinal limits, and expressing without apprehension his inmost thoughts. Of course he is not entitled to claim, on the whole, any superiority from being thus unfettered; for the zealous minister, who is working in bonds and condescending to teach the poor and ignorant, and reclaim the erring, in the way that is found most efficacious, may render a far greater service to the community than any one can do as a free investigator. There are various means of helping on human progress in its many gradations, which no uniformity law will ever reduce to a march in even line; some must go in advance to prepare the way as pioneers; others have to follow in great force with the heavy responsibility of commanders, and officers are needed to look after the limping and laggard element; a good understanding should subsist between all sections, forward and rearward, rather than a feeling of hostility.

In religion, as in other things, different grades of teaching are required for people in different stages of mental development; to attempt to force on all precisely the same lesson will not produce the greatest enlightenment. Among the world's sacred books and classics the Bible, with its many million-fold circulation, has come to occupy a pre-eminent

position. It carries more authoritative weight than any other revered volume, and, when wisely expounded in our schools and churches, is a very effective instrument for grounding the ignorant in good moral and religious principles. But an exposition of Scripture, which especially commends itself to the ignorant, will not serve equally well to edify and sustain the intelligent. If a minister goes from some backward rural district to take charge of a cultured, inquiring metropolitan congregation, he will have to change his method considerably in the new commission to meet its higher intellectual demands. It will not do to go on treating the Bible as historical from beginning to end, or literally inspired throughout and inerrant, nor to represent the ancient Jewish poets as more truly recipients of heavenly light than Wordsworth, Tennyson, or Browning. Neither will it do to maintain the credit of the old legend, that the turbulent Jews were God's chosen people, always divinely guided when under the direction of their priests. There is no surer way than this of driving thoughtful men in disgust from the churches and rendering them irreligious and godless. The author, while claiming the right to express his opinions freely as an individual, never engages in proselytism, and has not the least objection to orthodox teaching where it is appreciated and produces good results. It would delight him much to see a vindication of Herod written from an orthodox standpoint, so far as it might be found practicable to do so ; he would then bring it under the notice of some esteemed friends for whom his own outspoken production must naturally be rather unsuitable, and perhaps unacceptable.



# THE HISTORY OF HEROD.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE JEWISH PRIEST-RULE.

1. Solomon a just ruler of Israel. 3. Also a wise and honest teacher of the people. 5. After him came disorder and trouble. 6. Dispersionists and Restorationists. 7. The Promised Land. 9. Zionist movement. 13. Pharisaical exclusiveness of the followers of Ezra. 15. Alexander the Great. 17. Antiochus the Great. 19. Antiochus Epiphanes. 27. The Maccabees. 31. The Asmonean dissensions. 33. Pompey and the Roman protectorate. 36. The Idumeans. 37. Antipater made procurator. 38. His character and policy.

TO understand clearly Herod's position and conduct, we must compare him with preceding rulers of Israel, and to do this effectively, it is desirable to go back to his prototype, King Solomon. Herod and Solomon, though separated by a thousand years' space, had many features in common ; they were both religious men, and at the same time very tolerant in the exercise of their religion, building temples with liberality not only for Jews, but for Gentiles. They were remarkably free from race prejudice, doing their best to cultivate friendly relations between Jews and Gentiles, and maintain on their borders uninterrupted peace. Solomon, the descendant of



Jacob, however, had many advantages as a ruler over Herod the descendant of Esau ; being the son of a renowned King of Israel, there was no objection to him on the score of birth ; and he reigned before the priesthood had misgoverned and infatuated the people, while Herod reigned after the hagiarchy had done its worst. In Solomon's time, there was no sacerdotal legend of the calling of Abraham from among Chaldeans, and conferring of hereditary favour on his descendants. The king believed that God dealt justly with all people taking no account of their pedigree, and he was himself determined, as far as possible, to rule with like impartiality. He took under his special protection, the remnant of the Canaanites that had been hunted and persecuted in the land of Israel, and thus saved them from further ill-treatment. He employed Gentile artificers in his service, and, encouraged by his own example, inter-marriage with Gentiles, but had he lived among the prejudiced Jews of the post-exilic period, it would have been far more difficult to practise such liberality.

2. As the nation's chief magistrate, Solomon obtained a great reputation for wisdom in the administration of justice. The numerous legendary stories which set forth his wonderful shrewdness and knowledge of human nature in dealing with difficult cases, were doubtless founded on a substantial ground of tradition. Uninstructed Bible readers imagine that he had the Mosaic Law to guide him in his decisions, but the statutes which a later generation of priests ascribed to Moses were not then in existence. There was probably at that period, no written code whatever to confuse the intelligence and fetter the judgment of an upright man who stood between contending parties to settle their strife. Under such freedom from ambiguous precepts and conflicting inter-

pretations, much more equitable decisions would be given, than those pronounced long afterwards in Judea by puzzled rabbins. The king during his reign rightly kept the priests subordinate to the magistracy, they had comparatively little influence in governing the nation, and only made ordinances and ceremonial regulations for themselves.

3. Solomon not only governed his kingdom well and judged his people equitably, but, as a sage, gave them good instruction. Many writings ascribed to him were not really his, but they tend to confirm the belief that he was renowned for wise sayings, and very desirous to impart to his subjects a love of virtue, and ground them in the principles of religion. If a monarch is really wise and capable, he can do more good as a teacher than any one else, because he holds a recognised position of headship, and can speak to the people authoritatively as a father speaks to his children. He will have no need to flatter and humour any as an upstart teacher must do when seeking to attract a partisan or sectarian following. His well-known character and ability, and the great public service which he has rendered, are sure to command so much respect that he will gain the attention of every class, and may thus give the people collectively such honest counsel in regard to their duties as will contribute to the welfare of all. It was ethical instruction of this character that Solomon imparted, and if the twelve tribes whom he governed had only followed his precepts steadfastly from one generation to another, they would have continued to flourish and might have stood at the present day the most powerful community in the world.

4. Unfortunately, in Solomon's time and long after, there were no great political historians capable of appreciating his statesmanship, and giving the world a clear impartial record of his

eminent services. The only chroniclers of events that the Jews had were narrow-minded priests, who not only failed to understand him but were strongly prejudiced against him on account of his well-known religious liberality. In tolerating the worship of Moabites, Ammonites, and other subject peoples, and building high places for them, (1 Kings xi. 7) he was evidently seeking to educate them patiently and bring them nearer to his own higher religious conceptions. In this benevolent design, too, he must have had some success, for it is morally impossible that a wise ruler should join a large section of his non-conforming subjects in the communion of worship without gaining their affections and powerfully influencing them for good. But the intolerant priests did not believe in condescending to educate and elevate an idolatrous community, and they have represented that when the wisest teacher in Israel, to whom the Queen of Sheba came as a disciple, associated religiously with Moabites, Ammonites, and the queens of his own household, the result was not their reformation but his own corruption. They affirmed that the Jews were a holy people, defiled and contaminated by intercourse with other races, and in their estimation the right thing to do with any Gentile neighbours who would not submit to the afflictory form of circumcision was to kill them or keep them at a safe distance.

5. If Solomon and Herod, in tolerating all forms of worship, had really been corrupters of Israel, as the priests would have us believe, some improvement would have certainly come with the termination of their influence; but, so far from this being the case, it is notorious that after they died the state of the nation directly got worse through the loss of their wise supervision. Solomon had no competent successor to stand in his place, and the people whom

he had ruled and rendered prosperous, were soon torn asunder by partisan strife, and induced to form separate and rival nationalities. In this divided and weakened condition they were often in conflict, and thus fell an easy prey, first to the Egyptians, and afterwards to the Assyrians and others, and large numbers of them were borne away into captivity. The popular notion of those events, which are called the Babylonian Captivity and the restoration, is substantially this: that the Jewish people for the sin of idolatry were condemned to seventy years' penal servitude at Babylon, and at the end of that term were brought back thoroughly reformed to their own country. Very different in many respects was the character of the migrations to and from Babylon that actually occurred. Nebuchadnezzar did not invade Judea to punish that portion of the inhabitants whom the intolerant iconophobists accused of idolatry. He was ill-qualified for such a mission; indeed, the Maccabean author of "Daniel" represents that he set up a golden image and endeavoured to make his captives more idolatrous. In reality, however, he took to Babylon with perfect indifference as to their form of worship, many Jews belonging to both the religious parties which then existed. It was only a portion of one party—the iconophobists—who chose to return, and that not all at one time, but in several successive migrations, the principal being those of Zerubbabel, B.C. 535, Ezra, 458, and Nehemiah, 445. Ewald is of opinion that those Jews who first returned had only been forty-seven, or, at the most, forty-nine years in exile; but it is highly probable that small parties crept back to their native country at a still earlier period, just as there were unimportant migrations after the time of Nehemiah. While a majority of the exiled people were undoubtedly brought under the influence of a higher civilization in Chaldea, and



so benefited in various ways as to be reconciled to their position there, those who trooped back to Palestine were discontented priests and their followers, who clung to the idea of restoration, and desired to recover their former influence in Jerusalem. What they considered religion was the offering of sacrifices, ritual purifications, keeping the Sabbath strictly, abstaining from prohibited meats, and holding images in abhorrence. They were not only unreformed, but actually corrupted to some extent by Persian and Chaldean superstitions; they brought back with them to Palestine some new kinds of divination, the Satan and hell mythology, the belief in a bodily resurrection as taught by Zoroaster, and the fanatical asceticism and martyr mania which powerfully influenced many zealots during the wars of the Maccabees.

6. From the time of Zerubbabel those Jews who lived out of Palestine in Gentile countries, and continued faithful to their religion, became divided into two distinct parties—Dispersionists and Restorationists. The Dispersionists would not be persuaded by glowing predictions to join the excited bands who were desirous to build again the walls of Jerusalem. They knew that their religion had a territorial basis, and were ready enough to return to the land of their fathers if it could only have been cleared for them as they believed that it would be at some future time, but so long as the inhabitants were more than half Gentiles, with whom complications and troubles were sure to arise, they thought it best to hold themselves well together at a safe distance. They had no thought of reconstructing their nation elsewhere than in Palestine; but, so long as there seemed little prospect of doing so, were glad to accept as a present refuge any country where they might reside in peace. It was their aim to preserve themselves as a distinct



people in the midst of the Gentiles, and they soon learned from experience—as the Quakers and other Christian sects have since learned—that they could much better maintain a nonconformist position by associating as traders in large cities, than by acquiring land and devoting themselves to the pursuit of agriculture. Having little aptitude or inclination to take part in the public affairs of a Gentile country, a commercial life especially suited them and afforded them the most complete independence. And while they were thus dispersed they could submit with better grace to foreign taxation and the decisions of Gentile magistrates than it would have been possible to do in their own country. Being also freed from the sacrificial system, they had in their synagogues a purer form of worship than that established at Jerusalem, and when removed far from that centre of bigotry they learned better to tolerate other worshippers. In fact, the whole history of the Jews shows plainly that, so long as they choose to remain a peculiar people, they can do so with less prejudice to themselves and less harm to others in a dispersed condition than as a settled agricultural community in Palestine under a priestly government.

7. Those who hold a different opinion—the Restorationists—have always existed in more or less number from the time of the Chaldean exile, but they have never attained any great political power since they fell under the crushing blows of Titus and Adrian. They have been influenced in their resolve to reconstitute the nation in Palestine, partly by the old Restoration prophecies, and still more by the legend of the “Promised Land,” which originated at the same period. If the story of the Divine grant of territory made to Abraham and his posterity had been founded on fact, its truth would have been abundantly confirmed by the subsequent

course of history; we should have seen the Jews flourishing wonderfully in the particular region selected for them, and men of every other race withering there under adverse conditions and hardly capable of subsisting at all. The very reverse of this has happened; those who call themselves the children of Abraham have experienced great hardship in many lands, but they have suffered more severely in Palestine from Gentile competition than in any other part of the world. In Greek and Roman times they were over-matched, slaughtered without mercy, and turned into dung on their sacred inheritance; at the present day their colonists, who prefer to live peaceably there, are a poor and feeble folk and can only stand against the more vigorous Gentile cultivators by being liberally subsidised. There is a modern story of one David, a young Alsatian farmer, who had a wife promised him. A neighbouring farmer was constantly declaring that his daughter, Gretchen, was kept in reserve for him, and should be wedded to no one else. David, therefore, instead of looking about wisely for a helpmate, and making a fit selection like other young men, became foolishly biased in favour of the promised Gretchen, and was induced at length to take her as his wife, but she made him a very incompatible partner, and he found himself doomed to a miserable married existence.

8. The Jews have suffered in like manner, only a great deal worse, from having a certain land promised them by the priests, and being thus restricted in their choice of a fit territory for settlement. As they wished to remain a separate and distinct community when they migrated from Babylon, it would have been advantageous for them to proceed to some remote province of Arabia, or even to Abyssinia, where no formidable rivalry would have

been encountered, and they might have settled down in peace. But their leaders had not enough sagacity and freedom from prejudice to locate them where the preservation of their institutions and the purity of their race would be aided by geographical circumstances. They went in preference to the land which was said to have been promised them, and thus found themselves presently, to their great sorrow, just in the world's cross roads, between the borders of rival empires, where they could hardly escape being ground to pieces by Gentile collision. Palestine has always been a sort of meeting ground for Asia and Africa—a country evidently designed by nature for a mixed population, and not for the segregation of a pure race. If the restored people had acted wisely as colonists, and gradually extended their border by purchase, they would have found no great difficulty in maintaining a permanent national ascendancy. They were, however, too quarrelsome and aggressive, ever ready to resort to violent measures as means of expansion, and so were defeated by superior forces with terrible severity, and finally crushed. It has been computed that no less than three million Jews perished in the wars which were waged without effect during the Greek and Roman domination for the expulsion of Gentiles from the Promised Land. At a subsequent period, that is, during the Middle Ages, the dispersed Jews suffered immensely from persecution in various parts of Europe, and they would probably have found a ready way of escape from their troubles had not their choice of a free national position been restricted to Palestine. When Christian Nonconformists were persecuted in Europe, they cast their eyes across the Atlantic for a refuge, and soon established flourishing settlements in the New World. If Jews had looked round for an opening without prejudice, they could have gone there, too,

and might have now formed in America a strong nation. But as they would not think of seeking independence elsewhere than in their land of promise, which was then closed to them, there was nothing left for them but to fly from one European city to another, and submit to continual false accusations and cruelties.

9. When the modern Zionist movement for resettling the Holy Land commenced years ago, under the auspices of Sir Moses Montefiore and others, several enlightened Jews objected to it strongly, although entirely favourable to the resumption of agriculture by their community. They contended that Palestine was about the worst country in the world for teaching a commercial people to engage successfully in husbandry—land in America was cheaper and more fertile; a finer climate would also be found there, and a better government. One writer declared further that the best modern agriculture might be practised in America, whereas a return to Palestine would imply a return to the antiquated modes of Jewish tillage. “By difficulties,” said he, “we refer neither to pecuniary considerations nor to ordinary obstacles natural to the colonising of a new or neglected country. We grant that these may all be overcome. We will concede that the money might be forthcoming, the colonists would come forward, and the land would be secured. We will ignore the present condition of Palestine, and assume that everything would go straight. The difficulties that we desire to call attention to are of another kind; they are due simply to the fact that the agriculturists would be professing and believing Jews, who would practise the ordinances of their faith. The moment any number of Jews settle again in the Holy Land, every one of the Mosaic laws anent landholding and agriculture abrogated ‘*chutza la’ aretz*’ beyond its



confines, becomes again binding. The laws of 'ma'aser' tithe are in force; the ordinance of the 'peah,' not the ringlet, but the corner of the field, which must be left unharvested, is incumbent. The prohibition against 'kilayim,' two kinds of seed sown together; also against grafting and budding, has force. The 'b'chor,' first-born, among cattle and sheep must remain sacred, useless for either food or labour; and the 'sh' nas hashemitah' Sabbatical year, must be kept once in seven years. Do those who talk lightly of Jews succeeding as agriculturists in Palestine realise what these laws signify? They mean that the Jewish farmer must be prepared to lose altogether one crop out of seven, that at least one-sixth part of his sheep and cattle must remain unproductive, and one-sixth part of his grazing land must be devoted to maintaining this unprofitable live stock. A notable portion of his field, oliveyard, and vineyard, must be left for the poor, and in addition he becomes liable to a tax of one-tenth part of his produce for ecclesiastical purposes, in addition to such imposts as would be necessary for civil purposes. The enthusiastic writers who advocate the colonisation of Palestine on a large scale by Jewish effort will no doubt assert that the ordinances and laws referred to are obsolete, and should not be permitted to hinder the development of agriculture among the Jews there. We are willing also to admit this; but, unfortunately, one hard fact stares us in the face. The Jews who would be willing to return to Palestine are only to be found among the old-fashioned and orthodox section of our co-religionists, who cling with passionate intensity to the Holy Land and the faith born there. To them these laws are living ordinances, in desuetude only because they themselves reside without the land."—*Jewish World*.

10. Better results than this journal anticipated



have recently been obtained by Jewish colonists in Palestine, just because their disposition to revert to ancestral customs has been overcome by progressive men who have financed their industrial enterprise. The country has been for centuries a kind of pauper refuge for the Jews—the resort of numerous devout mendicants who have lived mainly on the alms regularly transmitted to Jerusalem by wealthy European co-religionists. About fifty years ago it began to be said that the pauperism of Palestine was becoming a seriously increasing burden on the community, and suggestions were made for training the indigent class collected there to industrial habits, so that they might partly earn the means of subsistence. Plots of land were purchased in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and elsewhere, on which a number of immigrant Jews incapable of self-support were located as colonists. They got on very badly in their new vocation, and would have failed entirely if left to their own resources and the direction of bigoted Eastern rabbins. Continual assistance from Europe, however, enabled them to tide over their difficulties, and they were brought at length by those who furnished them with capital under wise supervision. The *Alliance Israelite* established a good agricultural school at Jaffa, and Baron Edmond de Rothschild, and others, were at great pains in forming plantations, and teaching the best modern systems of fruit culture and manufacture of wine. Jewish husbandry thus extended in the Holy Land, and from Russia, Poland, and Roumania bodies of immigrants came for the express purpose of engaging in the pursuit, being well assured that a liberal patronage would secure them from failure.

11. Palestine has long been a Holy Land, and had an artificial value for Christians and Moslems as well as for Jews, and though the latter have been

increasing there of late, and are likely to increase further for some time, there is not the remotest chance of their becoming a majority. And it is well for them that it should be so, for if they were once to acquire a greater numerical strength than their Gentile rivals they would arm themselves as of old in support of their claims, and almost certainly be involved in ruinous wars. A far greater amount of suffering would thus overtake them than that which they have experienced from European persecutions. Here, in Europe, they are generally found good law-abiding citizens, not inclined to covet other people's property, but in Palestine they cannot help coveting, because they consider the whole stretch of country their rightful inheritance. The Gentiles at present settled there are in their estimation only an encampment of trespassers occupying unjustly a portion of the family estate of which they possess the title deeds. What the Zionists intensely covet in the Holy Land is the most holy spot of all—the site of the Temple—which no gold can buy, and they would deem it cheaply purchased with the sacrifice of a hundred thousand lives. Hence the Sultan's government is said to perceive a great danger in the increase of the Jewish population in Palestine, and to deem it politic to obstruct as far as possible the Zionist colonization movement. It is to the interest of the Jews, as well as good for the Gentile world, that they should never attain sufficient strength in the Promised Land to be induced to arm themselves afresh and attempt its complete recovery by force.

12. By observing well the character and aims of modern Zionists, we may better understand the great restoration movement that was long ago persisted in by their ancestors. The priests who went from Babylon, by permission of the Persian government to rebuild Jerusalem, resembled much the rabbins

now to be found in Palestine; they were not the most enlightened, but precisely the most bigoted and retrograde portion of the Jewish community. And there was no organisation of able laymen, no *Alliance Israelite* at that time to follow them with wise counsels and overrule their proceedings; so that they had things entirely their own way; and in the ordinances which they professed to derive from Moses, established probably the worst social and industrial economy in the world. There was also nothing then to prevent them from recovering the site of the Temple and restoring it, together with the old sacrificial customs which would have been far better superseded by the worship and teaching of the synagogues. The people whom they professed to guide were also for the most part of a rude and warlike character, very different from the poor colonists who now migrate from Eastern Europe to Palestine. Of modern Zionists the worst portion are beggars whom it is very difficult to reclaim, but the primitive Restorationists had in their community many indolent brethren who preferred to live as robbers and were altogether irreclaimable.

13. It would have been well if the narrow-minded Restorationists, who built the Second Temple, had possessed the enlightened and tolerant spirit of the great king who erected the First. Jews and Gentiles might have then intermarried and formed a peaceable and harmonious community. The priests were determined to prevent such a national blending and keep the distinct races that inhabited the country at perpetual enmity. With their proud exclusive spirit and extravagant claims it is no wonder that they were looked upon with such apprehension and distrust as the Mormon temple-builders were regarded some years ago at Nauvoo. One of the worst charges brought against members of this sect was their desertion in some instances of unconverted

wives. But the Restorationists who followed Ezra were more unscrupulous in dissolving family ties ; they were required to repudiate good spouses for no other fault than that of having in their veins Gentile blood. It was nothing that a woman might be faithful and affectionate to her husband and sincerely attached to the same religion ; when once her non-Jewish parentage was discovered, she and all her weeping children had to be cast off with remorseless cruelty. To force reluctant Jews to separate themselves from such wives and turn them adrift on the world, their austere leader says : " I contended with them and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair " (Neh. xiii. 25). And it was decreed, in respect to any one who would not submit to this ecclesiastical tyranny, that " all his substance should be forfeited and himself separated from the congregation " (Ezra x. 8). Is it any wonder that these exclusive people, when thus breaking up families, ending all amicable relations with the neighbouring Gentiles, and treating every one who was not of their race as an enemy, should provoke a great deal of ill-feeling on every side, together with apprehension of future trouble ?

14. After receiving so much generous treatment from their Chaldean and Persian rulers, it might have been supposed that the enmity of the Jews towards other races had greatly relented. But the Restoration prophets, with a presumptuous " Thus saith the Lord," were excited and fierce to a pitch of frenzy in calling down terrible curses and judgments on the surrounding nations, and dooming them to perish from off the face of the earth. Considering how many wrongs their ancestors had inflicted on Gentile communities, they had no reason to speak of themselves as an especially aggrieved people, and ought to have preached



reconciliation all round and mutual forgiveness, yet they only thought of vengeance and woe. Discourses, such as they delivered, could not fail to intensify the hostile spirit directed against the Gentile inhabitants of Palestine, and to stimulate the desire which was felt for their expulsion. The Samaritans and others who took alarm at the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, and sent letters to Persia to hinder and oppose the work, were not merely envious and bad people (Neh. ii. 10, vi. 1), but far-sighted politicians who beheld in the restoration of the walled city the putting on of Jewish armour as a preparation for future hostilities. Less prescient were the Persian monarchs, who sanctioned the enterprise of Zerubbabel and his successors, and some future Rawlinson may perhaps find in the cylinder writings of the East, a more correct explanation of their motives than has yet been afforded. It is evident, however, that they then felt well-assured of the permanence of their own dominion; they looked on the Jewish colonists who returned to Palestine as their loyal subjects migrating from one Persian province to another, and without the remotest dream of forming there eventually an independent nation.

15. Alexander the Great invaded Asia as the representative of principles the very opposite of those which characterised the Jewish Restorationists. No man could be farther removed than he from any feeling of religious intolerance or race prejudice. In all countries that he visited as a conqueror, he is said to have bowed reverently in the temples and shown every respect for the established form of worship, and, like the Roman conquerors, he did much, in the way of uniting nations under one government, to prepare the world for Monotheism. He planted numerous Greek colonies in Africa and Asia, and took especial pains to encourage



the intermarrying and mixing of races so that his various subjects might be brought to live together in harmony. More than ten thousand of the Macedonian soldiers followed his example in uniting themselves with Persian wives. The same wise purpose was manifested in his blending of troops, and—the contention of Grote notwithstanding—in that large far-sighted plan found in his papers for the joint colonisation of cities, and migration of people from Europe to Asia, and conversely, in order to bring those great continents into more harmony and promote their friendly intercourse. Had he lived to consolidate his vast empire he would have soon arrested the prejudicial designs of the Restorationists, and would have dealt with Jewish exclusiveness in much the same way as it had been previously treated by the Assyrian and Chaldean conquerors. Jews and Gentiles would have been mixed and made to change places to such an extent that they would in time have become completely assimilated. Unfortunately he died at the early age of thirty-two, and his magnificent plans for reconciling hostile races and drawing nations together in closer union and fellowship were sadly interrupted by the territorial quarrels of his successors.

16. Alexander transplanted a considerable number of Jews to the new city which he had founded in Egypt, and gave them the same privileges which he had conferred on the Macedonian colonists. After his death that portion of his dominion which included Egypt and Palestine fell to his general, named Ptolemy Soter, who endeavoured to carry out the same policy in dealing with the intractable Jewish community. He saw that it was desirable to check the Restorationists at Jerusalem, who were likely from their fanatical spirit to be a source of future trouble, and add to the Dispersionists at

Alexandria. Josephus says that "when he had taken many captives from the mountainous parts of Judea and from the places about Jerusalem and Samaria and near Mount Gerizim, he led them all into Egypt and so settled them there. . . . Nay, there were many other Jews who of their own accord went into Egypt, being invited by the fertility of the country and the liberality of Ptolemy. However, there were disagreements among their descendants with respect to the Samaritans on account of their resolution to preserve their particular customs, and they contended one with the other. Those of Jerusalem said that their temple was holy and resolved to send their sacrifices thither, but the Samaritans were determined that theirs should be sent to Mount Gerizim."—(Ant. xii. i. 1.)

17. Antiochus the Great, after carrying on a war with Ptolemy Philopater, succeeded at length in separating Palestine from the Egyptian dominion and uniting it to his own kingdom of Syria. The Jews experienced at his hands a no less generous treatment than that which they had received from the Ptolemies, and they found in his capital, Antioch, another favourable place of settlement, not much unlike Alexandria. Josephus says that this Antiochus, hoping to conciliate the Jews and attach them to his government, made very considerable grants to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the repair of their city and temple which had suffered during the war, and that he also remitted their taxes for three years. He further, at the instance of the priests, published the following decree : "It shall be lawful for no Gentile to come within the precincts of the temple round about, which thing is forbidden also to the Jews, excepting those who, according to their own custom, have purified themselves. Nor let any flesh of

horses, or of mules or of asses be brought into the city, whether they be tame or wild; nor that of leopards, or foxes, or hares, and in general that of any animal that the Jews are forbidden to eat. Nor let their skins be brought into the city, nor let any such animal be bred therein. Let them only be permitted to use the sacrifices derived from their forefathers with which they are obligated to make acceptable atonements to God. And whoever transgresses any of these orders, let him pay to the priests three thousand drachmas of silver." (Ant. XII. iii. 4.)

18. It is clear that, in some respects, Antiochus the Great went too far in humouring the prejudices of the strict Jews, and that is one reason why they soon after experienced an opposite treatment at the hands of his son Antiochus Epiphanes. All that they were fairly entitled to claim from the Government was the free exercise of their religion in every part of the country, such as was looked for by other communities. But they were far from being satisfied with religious freedom, and were seeking to establish in Jerusalem an unbearable ecclesiastical tyranny. While their peculiar worship was tolerated by the Greeks at Antioch, Alexandria, and elsewhere, they were wholly unwilling to reciprocate this toleration. And it was hard that a Gentile residing in Jerusalem could not keep a horse, nor establish a common tannery, nor even have in his possession a rabbit-skin without being pounced upon by officers of the high priest, and subjected to a preposterous fine. While, for any one to have an image in the house, if only for ornamental purposes, would have seriously endangered his life. Those of Jewish race were also liable to be stoned to death by a fanatical mob for any petty infraction of the law. Hence Mount Gerizim, where the more tolerant Samaritans wor-

shipped, became for such people a place of refuge, "If any one were accused by those of Jerusalem of having eaten things common, or of having broken the Sabbath, or of any other transgression of like nature, he fled away to the Shechemites, and said he was accused unjustly" (Ant., xii. viii. 7). The more intolerant section were hoping to extend their sacred area, and purge not only Jerusalem but the whole country of Palestine from Gentile defilement, and a reaction against their growing tyranny was inevitable. The barbarous treatment to which they were at length subjected by the Gentile party was not really, as their mendacious chroniclers have represented, an unprovoked persecution, but a fierce and angry retaliation.

19. Antiochus Epiphanes was preceded in the government by his elder and less energetic brother Seleucus. During the reign of this prince, Hyrcanus, a Jewish robber chief, actually took up the position of an independent sovereign on the other side of the Jordan, and the first business of Antiochus on coming to the throne was to effect his suppression. With respect to the war which he afterwards waged against a larger portion of his Jewish subjects, it is not easy to form a correct opinion from their own partial and highly-coloured reports. The author of the first book of Maccabees represents Antiochus and his army as savage desolators, marching from Egypt and assailing on two occasions the peaceful city of Jerusalem, just as a pack of wolves might pounce suddenly on a sheepfold. "They shed innocent blood on every side of the sanctuary and defiled it, insomuch that the inhabitants of Jerusalem fled because of them, whereupon the city was made a habitation of strangers and became strange to those that were born in her, and her own children left her. Her sanctuary was laid waste like the wilderness, her



feasts were turned into mourning, her sabbaths into reproach, her honour into contempt" (1 Macc. i. 37-39). The writer evidently knew how to draw terrible martyr pictures to inflame the minds of his countrymen, but for those who wish to get a clear and correct view of the conflicts at Jerusalem during the reign of Antiochus, his narrative is just as worthless as the prophetic history of the pseudo Daniel. On turning to Josephus, and also to the second book of Maccabees, we find that the heavy troubles which came on the Jews at this period originated entirely from their own religious dissensions, and chiefly from a dispute about the succession to the high-priesthood. It appears that the high-priest Onias—he who was very skilful in defending the temple by means of apparitions (2 Macc. iii. 25)—left at his decease an infant son and two brothers, one of the brothers being called by the same name as himself, while the other was called Jesus. This Jesus at first obtained the succession, but for some offence was deposed by the king, who then put in his place the younger Onias. We are told that the two brothers soon after bid one against the other for the king's favour, "Jesus changed his name to Jason, and Onias was called Menelaus. As the former raised a sedition against Menelaus, who had now taken his office, the multitude were divided between them. The sons of Tobias took the part of Menelaus, but most of the people assisted Jason. Menelaus and his friends being distressed at the opposition they encountered, went to Antiochus and told him that they wanted to abandon the Jewish customs and laws, and follow instead those of the Greeks. They asked him, therefore, to grant them permission to build a gymnasium at Jerusalem, and, when he had given them leave, they performed their exercises naked, as though they had been Greeks and not



circumcised Jews. Thus they left off the customs of their own country and imitated the customs of the Gentiles.”—(Ant. XII. v. 1.) .

20. While the above statement of Josephus is not in strict accord with that which he has given in the first book of the “ Wars,” the author of the second book of Maccabees tells a story which differs from both. He says that “ Jason, the brother of Onias, laboured underhand to be high-priest, promising to the king by intercession three hundred and sixty talents of silver and eighty talents of other revenue. Besides this he promised to assign a hundred and fifty more if he might have licence to set up a gymnasium for the training of youth in the fashions of the heathen, and to write them of Jerusalem by the name of Antiochians. Which when the king had granted and he had gotten into his hand the rule, he forthwith brought his own nation to the Greek fashion. And the royal privileges granted of special favour to the Jews by means of John, the father of Eupolemus, who went ambassador to Rome for amity and aid, he took away ; and, putting down the governments which were according to the Law, he brought up new customs against the Law. For he built gladly a gymnasium under the tower itself, and brought the chief young men under his subjection and made them wear a hat. Now such was the height of Greek fashions and increase of heathenish manners, through the exceeding profaneness of Jason, that ungodly wretch and no high-priest, that the priests had no more courage to serve at the altar, but, despising the temple and neglecting the sacrifices, hastened to be partakers of the unlawful allowance in the gymnasium when the game of Discus called them forth, not setting by the honours of their fathers, but liking the glory of the Grecians best of all.” —(2 Macc. iv. 7-15.)

21. This prejudiced and untruthful writer endeavours to make it appear that Jason and his party, in patronising certain innocent Greek customs and sports, had virtually apostatised from the Jewish religion and were endeavouring to effect its entire subversion. It is quite impossible that the bigoted, priest-ridden city of Jerusalem should have been so suddenly revolutionised. Only a few years before, in the reign of Antiochus the Great, certain very strict prohibitions were decreed at the instance of the priests to preserve the city from Gentile pollution. And those prohibitions were undoubtedly considered oppressive by the Gentile inhabitants, together with the more enlightened Jews, who obtained at length sufficient influence to get them removed. Even now there was no thought of tolerating any form of Gentile worship, or of introducing such obnoxious things as images into the city: Jason and his liberal friends would not have even dared to hint at such an innovation. In encouraging the language and patronising the diversions of the Greeks, they only aimed at making the Jews of Jerusalem less exclusive and more Hellenistic in manner, like their brethren of Antioch and Alexandria. A relaxation of the burdensome ceremonial law was not necessarily accompanied by a relaxation of morals or an increase of the spirit of profanity: it rendered the Jews more cheerful and sociable, and in various other ways was certain to influence them for good. Nor did this party manifest a tyrannical spirit, or think of using any other means for inducing young Jews to come over to their ways than that of their own example. If they repealed some of the obnoxious prohibitions for preserving the city from defilement, they did not attempt to uphold their Grecian customs by counter-prohibitions. It was their bigoted opponents—the men who were determined to arrest at

any cost the progress of Hellenism in Palestine—that were alone disposed to resort to compulsion. They wanted to ward off Gentile influences and maintain an exclusive position by such severe measures as were introduced by Ezra and Nehemiah, and then after awhile, as might have been expected, force was answered by force, and the whole country was involved in a fierce religious war.

22. The immediate cause which brought Antiochus to besiege and capture Jerusalem was not a covetous disposition and lust for plunder, as Josephus and other writers have most unjustly represented, but a faction fight between Jason, the deposed high-priest, and Menelaus, his successor. It was for the interest of the Jewish people that there should be some superior authority for the appointment of their high-priests, otherwise the rival claimants of the office would contend one against the other and cause a civil war. In the time of the Persian rule the high-priest John murdered his brother Jesus in the temple, through being jealous and apprehensive that he was intriguing against him and endeavouring to deprive him of the sacerdotal dignity (*Ant.* xi. vii. 1). Had it not been for the interposition of King Antiochus, as supreme arbiter, the sons of the high-priest Onias would have been certain to fight for the succession. Even if he received bribes from the candidates, as he is charged with doing, there was so little difference between them in respect to moral worth that scarcely any wrong could have so resulted. His decision was, at any rate, treated with respect; and it is clearly shown that he rendered good service in restraining and pacifying the rival Jewish factions from the circumstance that no sooner was he reported dead than they directly commenced fighting one against the other. We are told that, “when there was gone forth a false

rumour that Antiochus was dead, Jason took at least a thousand men and suddenly made an assault upon the city, and they that were upon the walls being put back and the city at length taken, Menelaus fled into the castle. But Jason slew his own citizens without mercy, not considering that to conquer them of his own nation would be disastrous for him, but treating them as though they were foreign enemies. . . . Now when this that was done came to the king's ears, he thought that Judea had revolted, whereupon, marching out of Egypt in a furious mind, he took the city by force of arms, and commanded his men not to spare such as they met, and to slay such as went up on the houses. Thus there was killing of young and old, making away with men, women, and children, slaying of virgins and infants. And there were destroyed within the space of three whole days eighty thousand, whereof forty thousand were slain in the conflict, and as many sold as slain. Yet he was not content with this, but presumed to go into the most holy temple of all the world—Menelaus, that traitor to the laws and to his own country, being his guide. And taking the holy vessels with polluted hands, and with profane hands pulling down the things that were dedicated by other kings to the augmentation and glory and honour of the place, he gave them away" (2 Macc. v. 5-16).

23. This writer's account of the terrible slaughter of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, when the city was taken by Antiochus, is a manifest exaggeration. Josephus, who has always been considered an exaggerator of numbers, says: "Some of the inhabitants he slew, and some he carried captive together with their wives and children, so that the multitude of those captives that were taken alive amounted to about ten thousand" (Ant. xii. v. 4). The Jews probably suffered heavily during the assault, but



the king's army suffered as well, for it was a fair stand-up fight between them, and not "a great massacre." While, had they opened the city gates on this occasion and submitted quietly to their ruler, they would not have suffered at all at his hands, but would have had an arbiter to settle promptly their own discords and prevent a further effusion of blood. The king was only doing his duty in suppressing a revolt by armed force; he had been put to a heavy expense in the reduction of the city, and, like any other victor, it was natural that he should indemnify himself as far as possible by taking what could be obtained in the way of spoils. The father of Antiochus had been a liberal benefactor of the temple; his brother Seleuchus "of his own revenues bore all the cost belonging to the service of the sacrifices" (2 Macc. iii. 3); and he himself, who was reckoned more liberal than any of his predecessors (1 Macc. iii. 30), would doubtless have contributed handsomely to the Jews' great religious establishment, if they had only been—we will not say grateful—but tolerably quiet and peaceable subjects, so as to have abstained at least from an unjustifiable revolt on hearing a report of his death. The insurgent Jews proved themselves wholly unworthy of the many rich presents which Gentile monarchs had conferred on their temple, and Antiochus, whom they stigmatised as a profane plunderer, was only requiting them as they justly deserved in taking some of those presents away and bestowing them elsewhere.

24. With respect to the further violent proceedings of Antiochus, and his alleged attempts to exterminate Judaism, it is difficult to form a correct opinion from the one-sided reports of the Maccabean chroniclers, on account of their mendacity and untrustworthiness. We know that the various Gentile conquerors of Judea were familiar with many



forms of worship, and not accustomed to persecute any people in consequence of their practising a strange religion. So long as their different subjects agreed to pay tribute and submit quietly to their monarchical rule, they were disposed to tolerate all religious and social customs however great their diversity. It is, therefore, impossible to believe what is said by the Maccabean writer—the author of the Book of Daniel—about Nebuchadnezzar erecting a colossal image at Babylon, and condemning all who refused to conform to its worship to a cruel death. And if the Jewish mind, at that period of excitement and strife, could generate such myths respecting Nebuchadnezzar, it could as readily conjure up legendary acts of persecution in connexion with Antiochus Epiphanes. A demand for such legends might then be said to exist. When the fanatical party, under the Maccabean leaders, were waging in every direction a fierce war against the heathen, nothing was more likely to obtain credit among them, and nerve their arms for combat, than stories of terrible wrong which their nation had suffered in time past from idolaters. We know that the Greeks, who settled in Asia and Africa under Alexander the Great and his successors, were not a bigoted and persecuting people, but inclined to liberality, disposed to tolerate all religions as they expected toleration themselves. They got on well enough with Persians, Syrians, Egyptians and others; but in some of the cities terrible quarrels broke out occasionally between them and the Jewish population, and, when they were greatly enraged and got the mastery, they showed very little mercy to their defeated opponents. The Jews, in their reports of these conflicts, invariably concealed their own faults, and represented [the Greeks as being guilty of unprovoked aggression. In reality, the

tumults originated from mutual provocation and insult; that is, from some silly dispute between a few bad, quarrelsome people who were found on both sides. But the common root of all these dissensions was the Jews' peculiarities, their superstitious repugnance to images and prohibited animals, and their intense horror at suffering from any Gentile contact, which they considered defilement. It was difficult for the more rude and ignorant class of Greeks to avoid quarrelling with a people so susceptible to offence; and this must have been especially the case in the holy city of Jerusalem, where no Gentile worship was tolerated. Religious customs and prejudices which give rise to tumults and put other people to an inconvenience would naturally be regarded by many as a nuisance demanding forcible suppression from the Government. And this view of the matter was probably taken by Antiochus after his capture of the city; he was exasperated at the conduct of the revolted Jews, and now that they were defeated resolved to overwhelm them with Gentile defilement, suppress their peculiar customs, and so turn their intolerance on themselves.

25. The Jewish Restorationists were always troublesome subjects, and there was much in their strange, unreasonable conduct calculated to vex a Gentile ruler. Every seventh year they were prohibited by their Law from cultivating the ground to raise the customary harvest, and in consequence of this foolish superstition, and the suffering which it entailed, they claimed to be exempted from the annual tribute. Their rigid observance of the weekly sabbath, their restricted dietary, and other customs, disqualified them, to a great extent, from serving the country in a military capacity. They were also, from some fancied pollution or other, ever finding occasion to quarrel with their Gentile

neighbours, and easily excited to engage in fanatical outbreaks. It was, therefore, only natural that Antiochus, who was responsible for maintaining order in the country, should earnestly desire to see them renounce their peculiarities and live as other men. He wanted, above all things, a united nation. His Jewish subjects were fast adopting the Greek language, and he hoped that they would also be induced eventually to clothe their religion in a Greek dress, or at least cease to regard his own form of worship with feelings of hostility. In order to break down the fanatical and intolerant spirit of the people, and emancipate them from the bondage of Rabbinism, he should have imitated the policy of Alexander and the Assyrian conquerors, and carried out, in successive migrations, another great Jewish dispersion. Had he, after capturing Jerusalem, made it a Grecian city, and distributed large numbers of the more intractable Jews throughout his Gentile provinces, the Restorationists might have been induced to postpone their visionary enterprise and thus have saved Palestine from a long succession of desolating wars. But he took a step which was both unwise and unjust in imitating their intolerance, and attempting, in the presence of the Holy City, to remove their prejudices by force, and he did not live long enough to correct his mistake and avert its evil consequences.

26. It is evident that Antiochus did not in the least understand the fanatical spirit which animated a large portion of the Jews ; he was not aware that he had to deal with a people who positively rejoiced in being subjected to any political pressure which they considered persecution, and who looked on a violent death as the greatest good fortune if it were only incurred in obstinately maintaining their ritualistic peculiarities. To be told to renounce circumcision and sabbath-keeping and conform to

the loyal sacrificial customs of the neighbouring people, was, to such fiery spirits as Mattathias Asmoneus and his five sons, a command to fight and enter Paradise. If these valiant men had taken up a purely defensive attitude, or simply made a stubborn passive resistance to Gentile coercion, as the Jews of Spain and Portugal did in the time of the Inquisition, they would have been entitled to some respect from every friend of religious freedom. They had, however, not the faintest idea of what we call toleration, and it would be difficult to point to a band of fighting zealots in any age more arrogant towards those who held other views of religion, or more fiercely aggressive. If a peaceable Jew, desirous of averting further bloodshed, chose to conform outwardly and under protest to the Hellenistic requirements of the king, or was even disposed to renounce the Levitical system as the ten tribes had done, it was nothing to Mattathias. Yet, when this zealot saw such a person manifest his loyalty by offering in the Hellenistic fashion the prescribed sacrifice, he, without more ado, ran and slew him, together with the king's commissioner. The quiet and reasonable portion of the Jewish people, instead of being left to exercise their own discretion in religious matters, were thenceforth placed between two terrors; they had on one side the fear of offending King Antiochus, and, on the other side, the greater fear of offending the family of the Maccabees.

27. In the two Maccabean chronicles we find several things of a mythical character—miracles and martyr-pictures, and the terrible death and dying confession of Antiochus—evidently written to produce a strong impression on the Jewish mind, and wholly unworthy of belief. But the narratives are, in the main, historical, and if there is anything to be gathered from them as undoubted fact it is



this: that Judas Maccabeus and his brothers soon became a great terror to "the wicked men in Israel,"—that is, to those Hellenising Jews who neglected the circumcision of their children, ate such kinds of food as were forbidden, and carried on agricultural work in the sabbatical year. "Now, when Judas saw all the mischief that Alcimus and his company had done among the Israelites, even above the heathen, he went into all the coasts of Judea round about, and took vengeance on them that had revolted from him, so that they durst no more go forth into the country." "Now, after the death of Judas, the wicked began to put forth their heads in all the coasts of Israel, and there rose up all such as wrought iniquity. In those days also was a very great famine, by reason of which the country revolted and went with them. Then Bacchides chose the wicked men and made them the lords of the country. . . . But Jonathan dwelt in Machmas, and began to govern the people, and he destroyed the ungodly men out of Israel." "Only at Bethsura certain of those that had forsaken the law remained still, for it was their place of refuge" (1 Macc. vii. 23, 24; ix. 23, 24, 73; x. 14).

28. Not content with making war on those Jewish brethren who differed from them in their more liberal interpretation of the Law, the Maccabees assailed in every direction unoffending Gentiles, and seem to have resolved on effecting their extirpation after the manner of Joshua. The heathen, as they were called, are constantly represented as being the enemies of the Jews, and so, indeed, they were, but only in consequence of suffering from their repeated aggressions. We are told that after the slaughter of Beth-horon, "the residue fled into the land of the Philistines. Then began the fear of Judas and his brethren, and an exceeding great



dread to fall upon the nations round about them.” “Then went Simon into Galilee, where he fought many battles with the heathen, so that they were discomfited. And he pursued them unto the gate of Ptolemais, and there were slain of the heathen about three thousand men, whose spoils he took.” “Judas and his host turned suddenly by the way of the wilderness unto Bosora, and, when he had won the city, he slew all the males with the edge of the sword, and took all their spoils and burned the city with fire. . . . This done, Judas turned aside to Maspha, and, after he had assaulted it, he took it and slew all the males, and received the spoils and burned it with fire. . . . Then all the heathen, being discomfited before him, cast away their weapons and fled into the temple of Carnaim. But they took the city and burned the temple and all that were therein. . . . So Judas turned to Azotus in the land of the Philistines, and when he had pulled down their altars and burned their carved images with fire, and spoiled their cities, he returned into the land of Judea” (1 Macc. iii. 25; v. 21, 22, 28, 43, 68). “And after the feast called Pentecost, they went forth against Gorgias, the governor of Idumea. . . . And, rushing unawares upon Gorgias, he put them to flight . . . . Now, under the coats of all those that were slain, they found things consecrated to the idols of the Jamnites which is forbidden the Jews by the Law. Then every man saw that this was the cause wherefore they were slain” (2 Macc. xii. 32, 37, 40). We are told in this chapter that the army of Judas slew in four successive battles, ninety thousand idolatrous Gentiles, and in the further conflict with Gorgias even those who fell on his own side are thus made, on evidence which looks not unlike a pious fraud, to appear guilty of idolatry; and, to improve the occasion and redeem them from Pur-

gatory, Judas collected no less than two thousand drachmas of silver, which he sent to Jerusalem as "a reconciliation for the dead."

29. In India, it sometimes happens that a Mahometan fanatic, on finding himself in the midst of an idolatrous crowd, draws his sword, and, cutting right and left with terrible fury, kills all he can reach till he at length falls himself exhausted and overpowered. Judas Maccabeus and his brothers made just such a rush at the heathen on a larger scale with an army of organised followers, and they achieved proportionately larger and more lasting results. The beneficial work of blending races which the Assyrians and Alexander the Great had carried out in Palestine and the neighbouring countries, these zealots strove hard by continual fighting to undo and to re-establish the old Jewish exclusiveness. By killing many thousands of Gentiles and Hellenistic Jews, and driving as many more out of the country, and by provoking retaliatory assaults on some of their dispersed brethren, they succeeded in bringing about a segregation of strict Jews within the borders of Judea, and rendering them more irreconcilable than ever to Gentile government. This was a very poor and unsatisfactory work to achieve, and it was also ominous of future calamities. The Jewish prophets had foretold a re-establishment of the twelve tribes of Israel in Palestine under a prince of the house of David. The Maccabees, at the end of their career of successful warfare, were a long way from realising this prophetic vision, since the greater part of Palestine was still in the occupation of Gentiles, and the greater part of their own race, including David's descendants, continued dispersed in other countries. The utmost that they were able to do in the way of furthering the restoration of Israel, was to establish in Judea, with Greek

and Roman permission, a semi-independent republic, which was soon converted into a sacerdotal monarchy. It would have been well if these warlike Nationalists could now have settled down quietly and been contented with their limited success, but they only grew more visionary, ambitious, and impatient of foreign control; they had been led by the dissensions of their opponents to over-estimate their strength and set the whole Gentile world at defiance, and the mad struggle commenced by Judas was to deluge the country with blood for generations to come, and only end with the overthrow of Barcochebas.

30. The jealousies of Syria and Egypt, and the contentions between the rival Syrian princes after the death of Antiochus, had enabled the Jews to take up a kind of national position which, under less favourable circumstances, with all their valour and enthusiasm, they could have never acquired. The stronger Gentile States were not now disposed to interfere with them, and it was their own fault that they failed to become a peaceful and prosperous community. When Simon Maccabeus met with a violent death, as the rest of the five warlike brothers had done, and was succeeded in the high-priesthood by his son, John Hyrcanus, the aggressive spirit of the Jews broke out afresh, and the nation started on a career of religious conquest. Hyrcanus, at the first opportunity, invaded and conquered Idumea, not to slay all the captive males, as his uncle Judas had done, but to force on them the rite of circumcision, and compel them to submit to the discipline of the Jewish law. He subsequently invaded Samaria, and utterly destroyed the rival temple of Mount Gerizim, which had long been an eyesore to the intolerant priests of Jerusalem. A people so jealous and bigoted ought to have confined themselves strictly within their own borders,

for they were, of all the races of Palestine, the least qualified to establish a common government and bring about such a reconciliation of differences as should serve to weld together into one nation Judea, Samaria, Idumea, the trans-Jordan provinces, and Galilee of the Gentiles. The Greeks, wherever they went as rulers, diffused their superior language and civilisation among subject communities, but the Jews, like their spiritual descendants the Turks, had no other constructive power to bind different peoples together but the proselytism of the sword.

31. And if these fanatical propagandists were not fitted to rule the neighbouring Gentiles, neither were they able to govern themselves, as is clearly shown by their turbulence and dissensions during the hundred years of the Asmonean priest-kings, when they enjoyed almost complete independence. John Hyrcanus, after all the glory and popularity which he acquired by his military successes, found it impossible to maintain his regal position amidst the bitter strife of the Sadducee and Pharisee factions without becoming himself a partisan. Aristobulus and Alexander Janneus, the two of his five sons who in due course succeeded him, were both driven by factious influence and the fear of being supplanted by rivals to the guilt of fratricide. The latter prince had to contend with a formidable rebellion, which was not suppressed without much bloodshed, and he did not consider himself safe from the populace at Jerusalem unless he was surrounded by a guard of foreign mercenaries. He left two sons, the elder of whom, Hyrcanus, at the death of the queen-mother, should have quietly succeeded by the prerogative of birth, but a large party of Jews sided with the younger, Aristobulus, and their arose in consequence a fierce civil war. Although by their religious training an exclusive



people, the Jews, in common with other weak nations, when they became divided into two hostile parties sought on each side to reverse any defeat which they might suffer by the solicitation of foreign assistance. Such intervention, if successful, could only be expected to end in the usual way,—that is, in the establishment of foreign domination. Hyrcanus, on being overpowered and deposed by Aristobulus, hoped at first to regain his throne by the aid of Aretas, the king of Arabia, whom he promised to compensate by restoring certain towns which his father Alexander had taken from the Arabians. Aretas agreed to this bargain, and, marching with a large army into Judea, he soon defeated Aristobulus, pursued him to Jerusalem, and vigorously besieged that city.

32. While Aretas, in company with Hyrcanus, was besieging Jerusalem, the Roman general, Pompey, was carrying on the war against Tigranes, in Armenia, and he despatched from that country his lieutenant, Scaurus, to settle the affairs of Syria. After reaching Damascus, and finding it already subdued by a Roman force, Scaurus went forward and crossed the Jordan to make observation of the war which was disturbing Judea. Ambassadors from both the contending princes now hastened to meet him, and with the offer of liberal presents they submitted their quarrel to his decision. Scaurus felt disposed to take the side of Aristobulus in opposition to the Arabians, and, being anxious to get rid of them, he commanded Aretas to raise the siege of Jerusalem and retire at once to his own country. Soon after, Pompey himself arrived at Damascus, and was there met by ambassadors from the two Jewish princes, who desired him to settle their dispute. “Hyrcanus complained that, although he was the elder brother, he was deprived of his birthright by Aristobulus, who had taken the greater



part of the country from him by force. He also said that the incursions which had been made into neighbouring countries, and the piracies which had been carried on at sea, were owing to Aristobulus; and that, were he not a man given to violence and disorder, the nation would not have revolted. And there were no less than a thousand Jews of good repute who confirmed this accusation. On the other hand, it was contended by Aristobulus, that Hyrcanus was deprived of the government because he was deficient in energy and incapable, and for fear that it should be transferred to others. And that, as to the title of king which he had assumed, it was no more than what his father had held before him. He then called for witnesses some persons who were both young and insolent, whose handsome clothes and ornaments were detested by the court; for they appeared, not as men humbly pleading a cause, but as if they were marching in a pompous procession. When Pompey had heard the causes of the two princes, and had condemned Aristobulus for his violent procedure, he spoke civilly to them and sent them away, assuring them that, when he had first settled the affairs of the Nabateans, he would also give judgment in their dispute. He commanded them in the mean time to rest quiet, and treated Aristobulus civilly, lest he should renew the war; which this prince, nevertheless, did, for, without awaiting the further decision of Pompey, he went to the city of Delius, and thence marched into Judea" (Ant., xiv. iii. 2, 3).

33. On hearing that Aristobulus was acting in this way, Pompey became angry, and, having settled the Nabatean and Syrian affairs, he presently led his own army into Judea. Aristobulus, when asked to deliver up the fortresses of which he had obtained possession, reluctantly complied with the request, and afterwards retired in displeasure to Jerusalem,

where he made preparations for war. But, on Pompey soon arriving with his army before Jerusalem, the prince repented of his rash conduct, and went forth to meet him and seek reconciliation. He promised to pay a sum of money and surrender the city: his partisans, however, who formed a majority of the inhabitants, would not permit this agreement to be executed; when Gabinius was sent with a body of soldiers to take possession, they found themselves excluded. The people of Jerusalem seem to have been just as much infatuated on this occasion as they were at an earlier period, when King Antiochus arrived before their walls and demanded admission. Civil war was raging among them, and one faction, to make matters worse, fought madly against the man who came with power and authority as an arbitrator to settle their dispute. Pompey, on learning that the partisans of Aristobulus were bent on making an obstinate resistance, detained that prince in his camp as a prisoner, and at once commenced to besiege the city. The Jews had no means of holding out long against the powerful Roman army, well provided with catapults and battering rams, and they put themselves to a further disadvantage by refusing to fight on the sabbath. When a part of the fortifications had been broken down, the soldiers poured in and captured both city and temple with great slaughter. "Next day, Pompey ordered those who had charge of the Temple to cleanse it, and to bring what sacrifices the Law required to God. The high-priesthood he then restored to Hyrcanus, both because he had hindered many from joining Aristobulus in the war, and because he had in other respects conducted himself well. He also punished those who were the authors of the war, and bestowed rewards on Faustus and others who had been foremost in mounting the city

wall. And he made Jerusalem tributary to the Romans, and took away those cities of Celesyria which the Jews had conquered, and put them under the authority of the Roman president, and confined the nation, which had been extending itself unduly, within its proper bounds" (Ant., xiv. iv. 4).

34. The Romans, in reducing the Jews from an independent to a tributary position, have often been represented as oppressors of that turbulent people, when in reality they were only preventing them from further oppressing others. They went to Palestine, not as rapacious conquerors, but as mediators, protectors, and friends. Some of their officers may have displayed freaks of cruelty and injustice in the country occasionally, as our own have done in India; but such conduct was not in harmony with the well-known disposition of the Imperial Government. So far from being enriched or strengthened in any way by the possession of Palestine, it would have been a great gain to their empire if the whole country could have been submerged or moored out into the middle of the Atlantic. All that they wanted there, as all that they wanted in Switzerland and Scotland, was the means of keeping the warlike population tolerably quiet, so as to safeguard their neighbouring provinces. On the other hand, thousands of poor Jews, scattered on every coast of the Mediterranean, found there law and order established for their benefit—the convenient shelter of a powerful political system, whose construction had cost them nothing. Defended by Roman armies, permitted to maintain their peculiar customs and worship, and to go where they pleased in perfect freedom gathering up the fruits of commerce, they were for many years much more favourably circumstanced than their brethren in Judea, who were scarcely

ever free from sanguinary strife. But now at length, with the establishment of the throne of Hyrcanus under a Roman protectorate, the Jews of Palestine were to be blessed with such security and liberty as had long been enjoyed by the Dispersionists. The Romans said in effect to them, "We will engage to protect your borders, and you have henceforth nothing to do but maintain your own peculiar laws and observances, and attend peacefully to the cultivation of your fields." The tender consideration which they had for the Jews' religious customs and privileges is clearly shown by the numerous proclamations that were published at various times in their behalf, some of these being seen by Josephus inscribed at Rome on tablets of brass (*Ant.*, *xiv.*, *x.* 6, 8, 12; *xii.* 4, 5; and *xvi.* *vi.* 2, 5, &c.).

35. If the Jews of Palestine had only been as enlightened and reasonable as the majority of the Dispersionists, so that they could have graciously accepted the Roman protectorate, and submitted quietly to their legitimate ruler, Hyrcanus, they would have had little to complain of in the way of oppression, and might have soon become, with all their privileges, the freest and happiest community in the world. Some of them were, indeed, of such a disposition, and, knowing that they had made a most advantageous political bargain, they determined to keep loyal to their hereditary ethnarch, and faithful to the imperial connexion. But the majority of them were so filled with conceit by the Maccabee traditions, and misled by the teaching of their priests, as to be utterly incapable of taking a sober, common-sense view of their position. In proportion as favours were conferred on them, they increased their demands, and became more petulant, stubborn, and intractable. They were unwilling to be fettered and restrained by any heathen



friendship ; it was not enough for them to labour quietly from day to day, and have the assurance of peace within their own borders ; they wanted the privilege of extending their borders from time to time, and repeating the glorious aggressive feats of their forefathers. A considerable number of the Jews of Palestine were also gloomy ascetics, who had come to entertain the belief that Israel was a righteous saint-nation, destined, like each individual saint, to suffer much hardship and wrong, in order to obtain at the approaching judgment of the world, an abundant recompense. In their eyes, it was by no means desirable to receive kind treatment from the Gentiles, or maintain friendly relations with them ; every good Israelite should rather hope to meet with persecution, and, if possible, obtain at their hands the crown of martyrdom. The Gentile nations, according to the showing of the prophets, were soon to be destroyed altogether at the great and terrible day of doom, and then there would be established for ever the kingdom of the saints of Israel. It was no easy matter for the ethnarch and his friends to govern a community so full of turbulence, and at the same time so fanatical and visionary, for they did not desire peace, but revolutionary troubles ; they were hoping to get advancement by wars, persecutions, tumults, convulsions, and the final dread wreck of the world.

36. The Jewish priest-kings who preceded Hyrcanus were mostly fierce, aggressive warriors, as was also his brother and rival, Aristobulus ; but he, on the contrary, was of a peaceful disposition, and only fitted for the priestly office. Had the people been thoroughly in accord with him, and anxious to settle down quietly after their many sanguinary struggles, all would have gone well, and they might have enjoyed a long period of rest



and prosperity. He was despised, however, by the ardent war-party, who followed the lead of his impetuous brother, and he would not long have maintained his position but for Roman support and the effective military assistance which he received from his Idumean friends, that is, from the family of Antipater. The conquest and forcible conversion of the Idumeans by John Hyrcanus had brought into the fold of Israel a new religious community, who, being children of Abraham, but not descendants of Jacob, were, on the score of pedigree, considered by the strict Israelites as being inferior to themselves, although some would have been considered by impartial observers morally superior. They were not so much under priestly domination, nor so rigidly enslaved by the ceremonial law; neither from a foolish pride of race did they hold their Gentile neighbours in such contempt and abhorrence. Moreover, as they had a sort of intermediate position between Gentiles and those who were Jews by descent, and understood their respective prejudices, they were better qualified than either Greeks or Romans to tone down the asperities which existed throughout Palestine, and heal the race-hatred and religious strife which had prevailed there since the wars of the Maccabees.

37. Antipas, the grandfather of Herod the Great, was appointed governor of Idumea by the Jewish king, Alexander Janneus. His son, Antipater, was a man of considerable ability, who managed to ingratiate himself by good services, not only with the Jews, but with the Romans. When the civil war arose between the brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, he threw his powerful influence into the scale in favour of the former prince, being in this respect thoroughly in accord with Pompey. He subsequently, at the head of a Jewish contingent,

rendered very great assistance to Julius Cæsar in his Egyptian war; and Cæsar, on coming to Syria, not only gave him the privilege of a Roman citizen and freedom from taxes, but constituted him procurator of Judea, and confirmed his friend Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood. Hyrcanus was still regarded as the legitimate king or ethnarch of the Jews, but he had only the capacity and training of a priest, and the actual ruling power was entirely in the hands of Antipater. Josephus informs us that, "when Antipater had conducted Cæsar out of Syria, he returned to Judea; and the first thing he did was to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, which Pompey had thrown down. Then he went over the country to quiet the tumults which prevailed, and, partly threatening and partly persuading the people, he told them that, in case they would submit to Hyrcanus, they should live happily and peaceably, and enjoy what they possessed; while if they hearkened to those who were for raising new troubles in order to get some gain to themselves, he declared that they should find him to be their conqueror instead of their procurator, and find Hyrcanus to be a tyrant instead of a king, and both the Romans and Cæsar to be their enemies. But, while he said this, he settled the affairs of the country by himself, because he saw that Hyrcanus was deficient in energy and unfit to manage the kingdom. So he constituted his eldest son, Phasaël, governor of Jerusalem and the parts about it, and sent his next son, Herod, who was very young, with equal authority into Galilee" (War, i. x. 4).

38. The Jewish general, Malichus, who served in the army of Hyrcanus, was extremely jealous of the Idumean commanders, and contrived to get Antipater poisoned, although this noble-minded man had previously saved his own life. There is no ground whatever for representing the murdered

procurator as a plotting and ambitious politician, seeking only to advance his own family interests, as some modern writers have attempted to depict him. Mr. Willett has taken a more correct view of his character. In speaking of the marriage of Alexander, son of Aristobulus, with Alexandra, daughter of Hyrcanus, of whom were born the Princess Mariamne and her brother, he says:—"Without a doubt, Antipater, father of Herod, favoured this union of the two families. Had he been opposed to it, so great was his influence, and so implicitly did Hyrcanus at this time submit to his counsel, that it would not have taken place. It is a proof of his moderation and disinterestedness, and shows convincingly that he sought not the throne, either for himself or for his sons. Had Antipater desired the throne, a word from him to Julius Cæsar, whom he so signally aided at Alexandria, in Egypt, at a subsequent period to this, would have sufficed. Julius Cæsar, in gratitude for his assistance was ready to grant any favour that he asked. But Antipater, the father, never varied in his fidelity to Hyrcanus. He was always animated by the most sincere love for his country." "It was his policy, as we have already remarked, to secure the friendly regard of the Romans, and various opportunities occurred for this purpose. Thus he assisted Scaurus, whom Pompey left governor of Syria, in his expedition against Aretas, king of Arabia. This happened shortly after the departure of Pompey from Syria. He negotiated a peace between them, which was as much wished for by Scaurus as it was by Aretas. He assisted also Gabinius and Antony in their expedition to Egypt, especially aiding their army in the passage across the desert. Of the aid he rendered Cæsar we have already spoken. Had he taken a different course, as Aristobulus and his sons did, treating

the Romans as enemies, Judea at that time, like Syria, would have ceased to exist as a kingdom, and would have become a Roman province. As it was, it remained free, and at his death, amid war and change on every hand, it had attained a high degree of prosperity." (Life and Times of Herod the Great, pp. 67-102.)

## CHAPTER II.

## HEROD'S ADVANCEMENT.

1. Herod under Hyrcanus. 2. The war with Aristobulus and his sons. 3. The Roman civil wars. 4. Herod's honours due to merit and not bribery. 6. He is made commander of the army of Celesyria. 7. Defeats Antigonus and espouses Mariamne. 8. Antony makes Herod and Phasael tetrarchs. 10. Antigonus and the Parthians besiege Jerusalem. 12. Herod's perilous flight to Masada. 14. Wanders in quest of aid to Arabia, Egypt, and Rome. 15. Is made king by the Roman Senate. 16. Relieves Masada and encamps before Jerusalem. 17. Is ill supported by the Roman forces. 19. Goes to assist Antony in the Parthian war. 20. His brother Joseph defeated and slain. 21. He vanquishes the army of Pappus. 22. Besieges and captures Jerusalem. 24. His war with the Arabians. 27. His interview with Augustus at Rhodes.

**D**URING the whole period that Hyrcanus reigned as ethnarch of the Jews, Herod served under him with the same fidelity that had distinguished his father, Antipater, and entertained no ambitious dream of acquiring for himself the throne. Like a modern vizier, or chancellor, he sought to stand behind the sovereign, and have power and influence in directing the affairs of the nation, and he knew that he could do so much more effectively in this way than by assuming himself the supreme authority. While he continued the faithful friend and adviser of Hyrcanus, the Jewish aristocracy, if somewhat jealous of him, were bound to treat him with respect; but they would have instantly turned against him if he had been the ethnarch's rival and enemy. At the same time,



had he only been a Jew by descent and of the royal Asmonean stock, he might have plotted, conspired, and rebelled as he pleased, and counted on the sympathy and support of half the nation. Hyrcanus was actually supplanted at length by his nephew, Antigonus, and with the defeat of that prince fell the short-lived Asmonean dynasty, and the regal authority eventually came to Herod, not by his own seeking, but in consequence of his loyal conduct and the important services which both he and his father had rendered in Palestine.

2. When Pompey captured Jerusalem, the dispute which had raged between Hyrcanus and his brother, Aristobulus, was thought to be ended ; but a number of untoward circumstances arose by which it was renewed and greatly prolonged, and many battles had to be fought before the decision which had been given against Aristobulus could be finally established. In the first place, on that prince and his two sons being sent as prisoners to Rome, one of the sons, Alexander, managed to escape on the way and return to Judea, where he soon collected a body of his father's partisans and renewed the civil war. Gabinius and Antony, assisted by some Jewish forces under Antipater, inflicted a severe defeat on him in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and compelled him to surrender the fortresses of which he had got possession. But, soon after Aristobulus himself, and his other son, Antigonus, escaped from their custodians at Rome, and hastened back to take part in the hostilities which were again troubling their country. He was defeated by Gabinius, and sent a second time to Rome with his sons as prisoners. Yet these sons were soon after released, and permitted to return to Judea, because Roman honour was affected by their detention : it was found that Gabinius, in conducting the war, had promised them

freedom under certain conditions. They soon requited the generosity of their conquerors by further revolt. Taking advantage of the absence of Gabinius in Egypt, Alexander collected some Jewish forces, and "set about killing all the Romans in the country." Gabinius, hearing of this mad outbreak, marched at once in pursuit of him, and, on overtaking him near Mount Tabor, in Galilee, severely defeated him and dispersed his followers. He was subsequently beheaded by some of Pompey's party at Antioch, and they also at a later period put to death the father, Aristobulus. His brother, Antigonus, as we shall presently see, lived some years longer to disturb the peace of the country, and trouble its Roman protectors by calling to his aid their enemies the Parthians.

3. But what made it still more difficult to give effect to the Roman arbitration in Judea were the terrible dissensions which broke out at this period among the arbitrators themselves. It was impossible that the imperial Romans should interpose with much vigour to settle the domestic strife of a tributary nation when they were troubled with a more serious civil war of their own. As was said of the Algerians in the revolutionary period of 1848-50, the inhabitants of Palestine, for several years, hardly knew from one month to another in whose hands was vested the supreme authority. They first bowed to the judgment of the victorious Pompey, but not long after they heard of his overthrow at Pharsalia, and there came by way of Egypt to settle their affairs the more powerful imperator, Julius Cæsar. He went through the country, bade them farewell, and returned triumphantly to Rome; then next came the startling announcement that he was slain in the senate-house, and the republican Cassius appeared among them as the representative of Roman dominion. The

assassins of Cæsar were at length beaten at Philippi by the friends of Cæsar, and Cassius, who had left Palestine and fallen in the battle, was succeeded by Mark Antony. This famous triumvir was at length defeated in turn at Actium, and there stood in his place on the Asiatic shore his mighty conqueror, Octavianus.

4. Through all these bewildering changes, through all the revolutionary contests which were raging on one side and on the other, Herod, after the example of his father, remained firm and self-possessed, and, without attaching himself wholly to any party or individual interest, held on faithfully to the Roman connexion, in which he saw the only hope of saving his country from anarchy. And the great Roman military chiefs, through all their fierce rivalry and prolonged struggles for power and supremacy, maintained an unshaken confidence in Herod. Being appointed governor of Galilee at an early age, he acquitted himself so well in that capacity that Sextus Cæsar, kinsman of the great Julius, who was then president of Syria, became his attached friend. Cassius hating the Cæsars, Antony hating Cassius, Octavianus the foe of Antony, however much at variance in other respects, were perfectly agreed that Palestine could in no other way be so effectively ruled as by the hands of this capable Idumean. Because he was liberal in sending presents to the Roman commanders, his enemies endeavoured to make it appear that he obtained their favour wholly by bribes. It might just as well have been represented that the Romans bribed him, since he received handsome presents from them in return. The exchange of gifts between them simply denoted the reciprocation of friendly sentiments, and, had he really been an incompetent ruler occupying the place of a better man, all the wealth of Crassus would not have

procured for him the Roman favour and preferment. "Herod," says Keim, "did not merely owe his success to that officious attention which displayed the greatness of Rome in costly hospitalities, gifts and edifices of every kind, but to his genuine fidelity and manly heroism, his pre-eminent wisdom and readiness to accept the culture of the West,—qualities which were recognised as adapting him to be a most useful ally in the territory which bounded the eastern empire of Rome, where the inhabitants were so ready to take offence."—(History of Jesus of Nazara, p. 236.)

5. That which especially raised Herod high in the estimation of the Romans was his well-known military capacity and unfailing loyalty to the empire. How his early youth was spent, and what kind of education he received before being sent into Galilee, we are not informed by the Jewish historians; but he became expert in the use of arms, and appears to have excelled in all kinds of manly exercises. In a passage evidently derived from Nicolaus of Damascus, it is said, "Herod had a body proportioned to his mind, and was ever a good and successful hunter by reason of his great skill in riding horses. In one day he captured no less than forty wild animals, for the country abounds in them, especially in wild boars and asses. He was also such a warrior as could not be withstood. In the gymnastic exercises many have been astonished to see how he threw the javelin and shot the arrow with unerring precision. Then, besides these performances depending on mental and bodily strength, fortune was favourable to him, for he rarely met with any disaster in war, and, when he did fail, it was not from any fault of his own, but he was either betrayed or the rashness of his soldiers involved him in defeat" (War, i. xxi. 13).

6. Herod relied not on fortune and high birth,



as the Asmonean princes were accustomed to do, but trusted rather to virtue, discipline, and a good cause. Nor can it be said in truth that he was fortunate in regard to circumstances and those whom he had to deal with, since few rulers ever had to encounter greater difficulties or more adversity. When he was made commander of the army of Celesyria, first by Sextus Cæsar and afterwards by Cassius, not only were all those Jews who formed the Nationalist party irreconcilably opposed to him, but he had bitter enemies, even among those who were attached to the cause of Hyrcanus. His father was murdered; Sextus Cæsar, who might have been considered his next best friend, was also taken off by the hand of an assassin; and Cassius, his subsequent patron, was in great discredit by reason of the heavy imposts which he levied on the country. No sooner had this chief marched out of Syria to join Brutus, and defend elsewhere the republican cause, than disturbances arose in Jerusalem. The Roman general, Felix, who had been left there with an army, made a sudden attempt to wrest the government of the city from Phasael. Herod, hearing of this, appealed at once to Fabius, the prefect of Damascus, and intended to march promptly to his brother's assistance, but was delayed for some time by a serious attack of illness. Meanwhile Phasael, who was an equally good soldier, managed to hold out successfully against Felix, and when Herod had regained his health, he advanced on Jerusalem, drove the Roman general from his fortified positions, and delivered the city.

7. It was not long before other enemies appeared. Marion, a general whom Cassius had left governor of Tyre, ventured to march into Galilee and seize on three of its fortresses. He further colleague'd with Ptolemy Mennius, a Syrian prince, to bring



back into Judea its former disturber, Antigonus, the surviving son of Aristobulus. Herod speedily defeated Marion, and recovered the fortresses, treating the prisoners of war with great liberality. Then, marching against Antigonus, who had collected a rebel army in Judea, he overthrew this persistent foe in a pitched battle, dispersed his followers, and again compelled him to seek refuge in a foreign country. He was probably never more popular than in the hour of triumph which followed this important victory. Hyrcanus and the people of Jerusalem went forth to meet him and crown him with garlands; his Idumean descent being entirely overlooked for the moment, he was welcomed as a veritable Jewish hero. What raised him still higher in the estimation of the Jews was his betrothal of the youthful princess, Mariamne, who seemed with her brother destined to heal all their divisions, as they were children of Alexander, son of Aristobulus, and Alexandra, daughter of Hyrcanus, thus reuniting the two rival branches of the Asmonean family. Like Napoleon, when he had risen by a successful military career to the level of princes, he seemed to think it proper to form a matrimonial alliance with them; but, when this step was effected, it did not, after all, turn out for his advantage. In his whole career he probably never committed a greater mistake than in this supposed highly politic betrothal, for, to say nothing of the degradation and wrong which it brought on his first wife, he could hardly have found anywhere a more unfitting partner than Mariamne, and in marrying her was only preparing trouble and sorrow for his declining years. It was impossible for him to conciliate the Nationalist party by connecting himself with the Asmoneans unless he was prepared to adopt both their policy and their prejudices, and devote his military talents to

prosecuting, as Mariamne's father had done, a sanguinary war of independence. It was his duty to stand as a mediator in Palestine, extending one hand to the Jews and the other to the Gentiles, but, when he went so far as to take a wife of the family of the Maccabees, the zealous Nationalists expected him thenceforth to become entirely devoted to their cause, and his still adhering steadfastly to Gentile friends caused the greatest discontent; the impartiality which he maintained was looked upon as an injustice.

8. No sooner were Brutus and Cassius defeated at Philippi, than all the world, as it usually happens, were eager to obtain the friendship of the conqueror. Antony at once set out with his division of the victorious army for Asia, and, on his arrival in Bithynia, was met by ambassadors from various countries. Among these came a powerful deputation of Jewish Nationalists, who were Herod's enemies, to declare that he and his brother Phasaël had got the government of the country entirely in their own hands, and had reduced Hyrcanus, in his political sphere, to the condition of a puppet. Herod himself soon after appeared with a party of Jewish friends to speak in his defence, and, because he was well received and succeeded in defeating the object of his accusers, it was said that he corrupted Antony with bribes. He undoubtedly, as well as the other pleaders, took presents with him to betoken friendship, as was usual in such circumstances; but the representation that the triumvir's judgment of his fitness to rule the country was in consequence determined by a preponderance of gifts can only be considered an absurd calumny. That Antony was disposed to do justice to any reasonable complaint of the Jews, is clearly shown by the proclamations which he made for the redress of the grievances which they had suffered at the

hands of Cassius (*Ant.*, xiv. xii. 4, 5). But he knew that Herod was not responsible for those wrongs; he remembered, too, that Antipater was his own comrade and friend when fighting some years before against Jewish rebels, and, taking all things into account, the petition which disaffected Jews now brought against the son, who was equally able and faithful to the Romans, must have struck him as being on their part an astounding piece of impudence.

9. When Antony at length arrived in Syria, he was again beset by Herod's importunate enemies, who notwithstanding their recent check, fancied that a loud and persistent clamour against him might yet be made to prevail. "There came a hundred of the most powerful Jews to accuse Herod and those about him, and they set men of the greatest eloquence to speak. But Messala contradicted them in behalf of Herod and Phasaël, and all this in the presence of Hyrcanus, who was already considered a relative of Herod. When Antony had heard both sides at Daphne, he asked Hyrcanus who succeeded best in ruling the nation, and was told that the most successful rulers were Herod and his friends. Then Antony, having regard also to his old friendship with Antipater, when they fought together under Gabinus, made both Herod and Phasaël tetrarchs, and committed to them the political affairs of Judea, and wrote letters to that purpose. He also bound fifteen of their adversaries and was going to put them to death, only that Herod entreated him to pardon them" (*Ant.*, xix. xiii. 1). "On hearing of this decision a still greater tumult arose in Jerusalem; so they sent a thousand ambassadors to meet Antony, who was on his way to Judea and had now arrived at Tyre. When informed of their coming to renew the clamour, he sent out the governor of

Tyre to punish all he could capture of them, and settle the newly-appointed tetrarchs in the government. But, before this, Herod and Hyrcanus went out on the sea-shore to intercept them, and earnestly entreat them not to bring war on their country and ruin on themselves by their rash contentions. As they became, however, still more outrageous, Antony sent out a body of troops, who killed several of them and wounded many. The dead were at once buried by Hyrcanus, while the wounded he put under the care of physicians. Yet even now those who fled continued riotous and disturbed the city, which so exasperated Antony that he at length put the prisoners to death (War, i. xii. 6, 7).

10. We have no information as to the next proceedings of Antony; but Cleopatra had met him before his arrival at Tyre, and he was so taken with the charms of that seductive woman that his attention was soon diverted from Syria to Egypt. Herod and Phasael, after being appointed tetrarchs, were left for some time to depend principally on their own resources for keeping down the turbulent population of Jerusalem. The disaffected Jews were always looking out for the coming of some friendly invader to overthrow their government; and, when Antony and his army had disappointed them in this respect, they began to cast their eyes hopefully on the Parthians. Antigonus, when he was defeated by Herod and driven out of the country, found a shelter once more with Ptolemy Mennius, in Syria, and, on the death of that prince, obtained the friendship of Lysanias, his son. The Parthians, under the command of Pacorus, taking advantage of the Roman troubles, at length invaded and got possession of Syria, when Antigonus promised them a thousand talents and five hundred women, on the condition that they should give him the throne of Judea and put Herod to death.



They readily agreed to this bargain, and taking Antigonus with them proceeded to invade Palestine by the way of Tyre and Sidon. Herod and his brother were thus placed in a position of great difficulty, as they were not strong enough to go forth and meet the invaders, and at the same time control the disaffected and insurgent population of Jerusalem. The Parthians were opposed by a body of loyal Galileans at Drymus, near Mount Carmel; but these they defeated, and afterwards gathered strength on their march and arrived in a little time with the bulk of their army before the city. Herod and Phasael, finding themselves beleagured both without and within the walls by a combined host eager to effect their overthrow, turned about like lions against their insurgent foes and fought a desperate battle in the market-place. They were outnumbered in this engagement, but after a while obtained a complete victory, and, when their enemies fled for refuge to the Temple, they pursued them hard, and placed soldiers in the neighbouring houses to keep them there safely imprisoned. These houses, with the armed men they contained, were soon after burned down and destroyed by other insurgents, and for several days a fierce desultory warfare was carried on in all parts of the city; but Herod and Phasael, with their disciplined forces, still continued to have the advantage.

11. While this skirmishing went on within the city, and the Parthians were encamped without; to complicate matters still further, a multitude of Jews, some armed and others unarmed, assembled from all parts of the country to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. These devout worshippers were granted admission, and they seem to have rendered some service in the preservation of order by forming a guard to the Temple, while Herod and



Phasael were doing their utmost to defend the palace of Hyrcanus and the city walls. At the same time they were helping to reduce the stock of provisions, and the position of the brave garrison was every day getting more critical, as there was no prospect of any Roman army advancing to their relief. Phasael, at length, very unwisely admitted into the city Pacorus and a small body of Parthian horsemen, under the promise that they would aid him in the restoration of order throughout the city. He was not aware of the previous bargain which had been made with Antigonus, and did not suspect that their real object was to detach him from his brother and inveigle him into their power as a captive. They acted, however, in such a courteous and friendly manner, when let into the city, that they won, not only his confidence, but that of Hyrcanus, although all along distrusted by Herod. Pacorus pretended that, if the rest of the Parthian army could be brought to Jerusalem, he would effectually restore order there, and confirm in their position the present rulers of the country. Hyrcanus and Phasael were at length actually persuaded to accompany a detachment of Parthians on a mission to their general, Barzapharnes, who was then in Galilee. They thus surrendered themselves as prisoners to a barbarous and treacherous enemy, while fondly imagining that they were in friendly hands, and going forth to bring additional aid for the pacification of the city.

12. The Parthians would have entrapped Herod in the same way, but he was strongly posted in another part of the city and too wary for them; and, knowing well his reputation as a warrior, they would not attack him openly only under very great advantages. He saw, however, that between these foreign enemies and the insurgent populace his position was becoming every day more untenable,

and that the only hope of safety now left was in getting away stealthily with his followers under the cover of darkness. Preparations were accordingly made for this perilous adventure; as the city was not completely invested, much treasure was secretly sent off in advance to Idumea. A number of beasts were at length collected, and on them were placed at night-time his mother and sister, his youngest brother, Pheroras, his mother-in-law, Alexandra, his wives, and other women, children, and attendants. While the insurgent city was sleeping his faithful soldiers and friends gathered about him to escort the caravan, and all marched forth silently beyond the gates, avoiding the Parthian camp, and taking the eastern road in the direction of the Dead Sea. Then when morning at length broke on Jerusalem, his baulked enemies, who had long been thirsting for his blood, were greatly enraged to find that he had thus managed to slip away and elude their grasp. Hoping, however, that they might yet succeed in overtaking and hunting him to death, both Parthians and Jews organised an expedition, and immediately went off in pursuit. The fugitives, being heavily encumbered and on a bad road, were actually overtaken when they had got about seven miles from the city. But Herod was not caught unprepared; he sent forward the women, children, servants, and baggage to be out of harm's way, and, drawing his soldiers together as a strong rear-guard, repeatedly faced about and beat off the pursuers. At one place, where a complete victory was thus obtained and the retreat made secure, he afterwards built, in commemoration, the city of Herodium. After continuing the march successfully some distance farther, he was met by his brother, Joseph, from Idumea, and they consulted together as to what should be next done in their still trying circumstances. He decided to

place his family, with their attendants and guards, to the number of about a thousand, in the strong and well-provisioned fortress of Masada, under Joseph's command. To the bulk of his army, which now amounted to nine thousand men, he distributed the greater portion of his money, and commanded them, for the present, to disperse through Idumea, and support themselves as they best could, while he went on with a small band of chosen attendants to seek aid from Malchus, the king of Arabia.

13. Meanwhile Jerusalem, if no longer in a state of insurrection, was full of revolutionary trouble and confusion. The Nationalist party there had achieved what they at first considered a great triumph; they had got rid of Hyrcanus and his Idumean commanders, and had put into his place, as high-priest and king, Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus. But the change so far from bringing with it any solid advantages, proved in its results most disastrous to the whole population. For, while under their late rulers there was no real oppression to complain of and their property was protected, now all Jerusalem and the neighbouring country were plundered by the Parthians. Antigonus had promised to remunerate them liberally for overthrowing his rivals; but the profusion of spoils, the money and women that he was chiefly calculating on, had been escorted away in safety by Herod, and, thus being unable to satisfy them, they at once assumed the position of conquerors, and set about to compensate themselves. Moreover, the city, which might have rested in peace under the Roman protectorate and the able administration of Herod and Phasael, was now doomed to suffer severely from a prolonged civil war. Never did a factious and turbulent people, deaf to all reason, commit a greater mistake, or

bring on themselves a more justly-deserved punishment. Antigonus, having got possession of his uncle and rival, did not go so far as to put him to death, but had him so maimed that, according to the Jewish law, he would be ever after incapacitated for the high-priest's office, and then sent him away as an exile to Parthia. Phasael, the other distinguished prisoner of the Parthians, finding that he was doomed to die, anticipated his murderers by taking his own life, which, under such circumstances, was considered both by Jews and Gentiles an act of heroism. He is said to have died with great cheerfulness in consequence of having learned just before that his brother, with the beleagured army and treasure, had managed to get away safely from Jerusalem,

14. Herod, having distributed money liberally among his disbanded soldiers, and thus greatly reduced his resources, sought to obtain from Malchus, the Arabian king, a loan of three hundred talents for the purpose of redeeming Phasael. Though under some obligations to him, Malchus refused to render him the smallest assistance in his time of need, for fear, as he alleged, that by so doing he should give offence to the Parthians. Leaving Arabia, therefore, in sorrow and disappointment, he next bent his course towards Egypt, and, on arriving at Rhinocolura, heard for the first time the painful intelligence of his captive brother's death. At Pelusium he took ship and proceeded to Alexandria, intending from that port to sail for Italy and Rome. Cleopatra had at this period no bad designs against him; she gave him a splendid reception in the Egyptian capital, and, entreated him to take command of her forces which were just setting out on an expedition. But he declined all advancement at her hands, being anxious to procure Roman aid, and relieve, with as



little delay as possible, the friends that he had left behind at Masada. Though the weather was boisterous, he determined to set sail and risk all the dangers of the sea; and, soon encountering a violent storm, his vessel was much damaged, and had to part with her burden, but at length was enabled to land him at Rhodes. Here he had the good fortune to meet two of his principal friends, Sappinius and Ptolemy, who afterwards rendered him great assistance as ministers of state. His funds were now still further reduced, but he, nevertheless, spent a considerable sum in fitting up a large three-decked ship in order to renew the voyage, and also gave something to relieve the distress from which the inhabitants then suffered. When all was at length got ready, he again embarked with his followers and sailed to Brundisium, and soon after reached Rome, where he related the whole story of the troubles and adversities which had befallen him to his friend Antony.

15. "Antony," we are told, "was moved with compassion at Herod's misfortunes, especially when he called to mind how hospitably he had been treated by Antipater, and also on account of Herod's own conduct. He had formerly made him tetrarch, and he now resolved on getting him made king of Judea. The contest which he had waged with Antigonus served further to recommend him to Antony, who regarded that prince as a seditious person and an enemy of the Romans. And, as for Cæsar (Octavianus), Herod found him even better prepared than Antony to place him on the throne, from remembering the campaigns that he had gone through with his father (Antipater), and the hospitality and entire good-will that he had experienced from him. Besides, he was pleased with the energy and activity that he now saw in Herod himself.



He, therefore, called the Senate together, and first Messalas, and afterwards Atratinus, produced Herod before the assembly, and gave a full account of the merits of his father and of his own good-will to the Roman people. At the same time they showed that Antigonus was the enemy of the Romans, not only on account of his former war, but because he now slighted them, and took the government by means of the Parthians. These reasons greatly moved the Senate, while just then Antony came in, and told them that it was for their advantage in the Parthian war that Herod should be king; so for it they all gave their votes. When the Senate had separated, Antony and Cæsar went out with Herod between them, while the consul and the rest of the magistrates went before in order to offer sacrifices and lay up the decree in the Capitol. Antony also made a feast for Herod on the first day of his reign" (War, i. xiv. 4).

16. Having arranged everything satisfactorily at Rome, Herod lost no time in proceeding to take possession of his kingdom, and sailing from Italy with his little company of friends and fellow-adventurers, he soon after arrived at Ptolemais. The news of his landing spread in every direction, and, as he had always been popular in that province, the sturdy Galilean peasants and many of his former soldiers readily flocked to join him, so that he soon got together a considerable force. Instead of marching straight on Jerusalem, he was desirous in the first place, to reach Idumea, that he might further recruit his army there, and, at the same time, relieve his family and their attendants, who were shut up in the fortress of Masada. Advancing southward along the coast, he succeeded in capturing the port of Joppa; then, continuing his march through Judea, and meeting occasional resistance from the scattered forces of Antigonus, he came at

length on the track of his recent harassing flight, and saw before him the rock-perched fortress which sheltered his relatives and friends. Never was a more welcome relief effected by indomitable perseverance, or a more joyful family reunion. Joseph, whom he left in command, had looked well after the beleagured party during the whole period of his absence: they had suffered occasionally for want of water, but their provisions held out well, and they had made some successful sallies against the enemy. Meanwhile, the Roman general, Ventidius, had been sent with an army to drive the Parthian invaders out of Syria, and a portion of his forces, under the command of Silo, marched into Judea for the purpose of rendering Herod assistance. When the latter had relieved Masada and the neighbouring fortress of Ressa, and sent his relatives into Samaria to be out of danger, he advanced to commence the siege of Jerusalem. His camp being pitched on the west side of the city, the defenders at once assailed his men by a vigorous discharge of arrows and darts. He then commanded a proclamation to be made at the wall that he was come for the good of the people and the preservation of the city, not to be revenged, but to grant his worst enemies forgiveness if they would only desist from further hostility. The party of Antigonus thereupon made a loud counter-appeal, to prevent this proclamation from being heard, and endeavoured at the same time to drive the besiegers from the wall. Herod was not yet fully prepared to invest the city, and, finding that there was no prospect of obtaining its peaceful surrender, so as to prevent a further effusion of blood, he quietly drew off his forces, to strengthen himself for the final conflict.

17. When Antigonus found that he could no longer depend on the assistance of the Parthians,

he endeavoured to bring some of the Romans over to his cause by the means of bribes. It soon became apparent that Silo had been corrupted to some extent, since he made a loud clamour about the want of provisions and the necessity of going into places convenient for winter-quarters, and thus he was suspected of desiring to break up the siege. Herod, however, went to the captains and soldiers who were under Silo, and entreated them not to leave him, as he had been sent there by the joint authority of Cæsar, Antony, and the Senate of Rome. He promised them, too, that, although the neighbouring country was laid waste, he would take care to have all their wants supplied, and forthwith sent a message to his friends in Samaria, desiring them to bring, with all speed, corn, wine, oil, and cattle to Jericho. Antigonus, hearing that he had made this arrangement to provision the besieging forces, endeavoured to prevent it by sending some of his party to lie in ambush and intercept the convoys. To meet this movement, Herod took five Roman and five Jewish cohorts, with a body of irregular troops, and marched straight on Jericho; and, as the place was now well provisioned and deserted by the greater portion of the inhabitants, he left the Romans there in winter-quarters. The rest of his army he also distributed for the winter in other towns of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee which had come over to him, giving to each soldier a hundred and fifty drachmas, and to captains in proportion. Silo and his commanders, after being supplied with provisions by Antigonus for nearly a month, abandoned his cause, and went into Galilee to seek a reconciliation with Herod.

18. The whole of Galilee having come over to Herod, with the exception of the robber bands who dwelt in caves, he carried on for some time against these obstinate enemies a vigorous subordinate war.

It was desirable to march southward again as soon as possible, and commence in earnest the siege of Jerusalem, but other untoward circumstances arose which further delayed that enterprise. Antony had gone to Mesopotamia to assist Ventidius in prosecuting the Parthian war, and Herod also sent Silo away there from a conviction that he would not render any effective service in Judea. Meanwhile, Ventidius, having gained an important victory over the Parthians, sent two legions of foot and a thousand horse to the assistance of Herod under the command of Macherus. This general proved, in some respects, a worse auxiliary even than Silo, for instead of putting himself at once under Herod's authority, he advanced into Judea, and commenced there to make war on his own account. Having encountered some unexpected resistance in the vicinity of Jerusalem, he retired in a rage to Emmaus and slew all the Jews that he met, whether they were friends or foes. Herod was greatly provoked at this rash proceeding, and resolved to inform Antony that he was able to beat Antigonus himself, and how he stood in no need of such helpers, who did him more harm than even his enemies. Soon after, Macherus went humbly to him to apologise for his indiscretions, and beg that they might not be reported to Antony. Herod thus became reconciled to the man; but, on learning that Antony was heavily engaged at the siege of Samosata, on the Euphrates, he determined to proceed thither with a body of chosen troops, hoping to render his Roman friends better assistance than that which he had himself received. Leaving his brother Joseph with the army which was preparing to besiege Jerusalem, he charged him on no account to quarrel with Macherus or run any great risks, and then marched himself, with a select detachment to Antioch.



19. Herod found, on arriving at Antioch, a considerable number of men who were desirous of going to Antony's assistance; but they dare not advance on account of the road being difficult and infested with brigands, who had slain many by lying in ambush. He encouraged them to proceed with his own soldiers, and became their leader and captain, so that they now all marched together with great confidence. When within two days' march of Samosata, they came to a difficult mountain-pass which was covered with brushwood, and, as soon as the foremost ranks had got through the pass, an ambush of five hundred brigands fell on them, and produced a partial rout; but Herod, riding hard from the rear to the scene of action, speedily rallied them, and the brigands were at once overpowered, and those who were not slain were dispersed. They were now enabled to complete their march unmolested to Samosata. "Antony sent out his army in all their proper habiliments to meet Herod and show him respect, for he greatly admired the courage which he had manifested on the road and his generosity in bringing them assistance. He saluted him also, and embraced him in a most cordial manner. Antiochus soon after delivered up the fortress, and thus the war came to an end. Then Antony committed some of his forces to Sossius, and directed him to assist Herod, while he himself went on to Egypt. Sossius, therefore sent on two legions of his army into Judea, to take part in the war there, and he followed with the rest" (Ant., XIV. xv. 9).

20. Herod's own army had not prospered in Judea during his absence. His brother Joseph, notwithstanding the charge which had been given him to make no rash adventures, took five regiments, and went hastily to Jericho to reap the corn in that district. These regiments, being newly raised out of

Syria and unaccustomed to war, were taken by surprise in difficult positions, and defeated with great slaughter. Joseph himself was among the slain; and Antigonos, with the barbarity for which he was noted, beheaded the body of the fallen commander, although Pheroras, the youngest brother of Herod, sent and offered fifty talents for its redemption. When the news of this defeat was spread throughout the country, many people who had submitted to the government of Herod revolted and went over to Antigonos. The messengers, who went to inform Herod of what had occurred, met him at Daphne, and he thereupon hastened his march, and soon came to the mountains of Libanus. Eight hundred men of that district joined him; then, in making a night-march, he fell in with a body of the enemy, who were soon defeated and driven into a fortress. In the morning he intended to attack this place; but, as there happened to spring up a violent storm, his troops were drawn off for shelter into the neighbouring villages. Meanwhile, another Roman legion came up, and the enemy, perceiving that resistance was hopeless, evacuated the fortress, and got away under cover of the night. Herod, having now collected a strong force, marched directly on Jericho with the view of retrieving speedily the heavy losses which he had there sustained and avenging his brother's death.

21. Antigonos, on learning that Herod had again arrived in Judea, sent the commander, Pappus, to get behind him with a strong force, and so make an invasion of Samaria. He also despatched six thousand men to oppose his advance, and these took up a strong position on the high hills in the neighbourhood of Jericho. As Herod's army approached, they ran down the slope to make an attack, not venturing to engage hand-to-hand, but throwing stones and darts at a distance; and with one of

their darts he was wounded himself in the side. He continued to advance, however, and succeeded in occupying Jericho, and soon after captured and destroyed five small towns. Then, every day, there came into him a number of Jews, some on account of the victories he had won, and others because they hated Antigonus. He next marched to meet the army of Pappus, who was encamped at the village of Isanas, where there presently ensued a fierce conflict. That portion of the enemy's forces directly opposed to Herod was soon beaten; but, as the rest maintained a stubborn resistance, he turned against them also, till the whole were at length vanquished with great slaughter and driven back into the village. Every house was now crowded with the fugitives, some even getting upon the roofs, and Herod's soldiers, surrounding them, directly commenced a terrible work of demolition and carnage. The houses were pulled to pieces in succession, the roofs and floors were shaken down, so that many lay crushed in the ruin beneath, while those who escaped and fought hard for their lives were mostly despatched with the javelin or sword. As evening closed in and the soldiers were worn out with fatigue, Herod himself, when the struggle seemed over, was in very great danger of his life. Going with one attendant to refresh himself at a public bath, he had just stripped naked, and was about to plunge into the water, when one of the flying enemy came rushing there for shelter with a sword in his hand, while several armed comrades followed close at his heels. They might have despatched him easily, and thus with a single stroke reversed the fortune of the day; but, being in a state of trepidation and thinking only of their own safety, they all passed him by, and so got away into the public road. What made the victory the more satisfactory to Herod was its

resulting in the death of the commander, Pappus, by whose hand his brother Joseph had fallen at Jericho.

22. The consternation which followed the terrible battle of Isanas was so great, that Herod would have taken advantage of it and marched straight on Jerusalem, had it not been just at the commencement of another winter. It was now nearly three years since he had been made king of Judea; yet, from various delays in prosecuting the war, he had not been enabled to take possession of his capital. As soon, however, as winter broke, he led his victorious army against the city, which was still held by Antigonus, and, encamping on the same side that Pompey had done, made diligent preparations for the siege. A number of trees were cut down, the suburbs were demolished, three huge banks were raised, and on those banks towers were erected. But, while this work was proceeding according to his directions, Herod was drawn aside by another important but very different business. Since the relief of Masada, his family had found a secure retreat in Samaria, and he now went thither to consummate his marriage with Mariamne, the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus, to whom he had long been espoused. As soon as the wedding festivities were over, he returned with reinforcements to Jerusalem. Sossius, the Roman commander, also arrived with his troops, and, when the whole army of the besiegers had assembled, there were eleven battalions of foot and six thousand horse, forming altogether, with the Syrian auxiliaries, about thirty thousand men.

23. The final conflict, which eventuated in the fall of Jerusalem, is thus described in the narrative which Josephus derived from the contemporary historian, Nicolaus: "Now the Jews who were enclosed by the city walls fought against Herod



with much spirit. They also gave out many prophecies concerning the Temple, and uttered things agreeable to the people, as if God would deliver them from the dangers by which they were threatened. Moreover, they swept off all provisions from the neighbourhood of the city, that the besiegers might find no sustenance either for man or beast. When Herod saw what depredations were thus committed, he set ambuscades at certain places, in order to keep them in check, and at the same time sent legions to forage in remote districts, and bring in provisions. As it was summer-time, the besiegers soon managed to throw up three embankments, and they were constantly at work in great force. Then they brought their engines to bear, and struck the city-walls, and tried by every means to break through, yet made they no impression, and neither caused any great alarm. Nay, those who were besieged sallied forth and set fire to some of the engines, and fought hand to hand as bravely as the Roman soldiers, although not with the same skill. But, where any works had been destroyed, the besiegers rebuilt them, and, making mines underground, the two armies so met each other, and fought with great courage and ferocity. The people of the city held out very obstinately, although provisions ran short, and they were weakened by famine, for this happened to be a sabbatical year. As the walls proved to be too strong to be battered down, it was determined to scale them, and the first to mount were twenty of Herod's picked men, who were followed by several centurions of the army of Sossius. The first wall was thus taken in forty days, and the second in fifteen more days. Then some of the colonnades about the temple were burned, and Herod gave out that they were fired by the party of Antigonus that on him might fall the popular indignation.

When the lower city and the outer court of the Temple were taken, the Jews retired to the upper city, and fled into the inner court. And now, fearing lest the besiegers should prevent them from offering the daily sacrifices, they sent an embassy, asking to be allowed to bring in beasts only for that holy purpose. Herod granted their request, hoping they would so be induced the more readily to yield; but, when he saw that they were still determined on an obstinate resistance, he gave orders to capture the city by storm. The besiegers now rushed into the streets and into the houses, slaying all they could, as though they were resolved not to leave one of their adversaries alive, for they were enraged at the city holding out with so much stubbornness, and prolonging the hardships of the siege. In vain Herod besought the infuriated soldiers to spare the people; they cut down all they met, old and young, women and children, and were deaf to every appeal for mercy. Some fled for shelter to the Temple, but there was no certain refuge anywhere. Antigonus, seeing that further resistance was hopeless, came down from the citadel and threw himself at the feet of Sossius, who took no pity on him, but insulted him, calling him Antigone, that is, a woman, and not a man. He did not, however, give him freedom as a woman, but put him in bonds, and kept him in close custody. As for Herod, he was greatly concerned at the crowd of Gentile soldiers who rushed to see the Temple and the sacred things it contained, knowing that, if it should suffer profanation, victory would be to him worse than a defeat. Therefore he used entreaties and threatenings, and sometimes even force, to restrain the curiosity of the soldiers, and keep them away. He also prohibited the plunder that was going on in the streets, and many times asked Sossius whether the Romans would empty

the city both of money and men, and leave him only king of a desert. He further declared that he esteemed the dominion of the whole earth as by no means an equivalent satisfaction for such a slaughter of his people. Then, when Sossius said this plunder was justly due to the soldiers for what they had undergone in the siege, he replied that he would willingly reward every man from his own purse, and by this means he redeemed what remained in the city from spoliation. His promise was also duly fulfilled, for he gave to every soldier a present, and to the captains he gave in proportion, and a most royal present to Sossius himself, till they all went away well requited" (Ant., xiv. xvi. 2, 3).

24. With this capture of Jerusalem by Herod and Sossius, twenty-seven years after its capture by Pompey, the Roman protectorate was again established in Palestine, and an end made of the long civil war which Aristobulus and his sons brought on the country. Herod was now firmly seated in the government, for the Nationalist party, being humbled with much suffering, and having lost their leaders, were not further inclined to openly dispute his authority. But, even when he thus stood on the crushed rebellion, and had recalled Hyrcanus from Parthia to share with him the honours of government, and had secured peace at home, he became involved, to some extent, in the wide-spread quarrel which arose a few years afterwards between his powerful friends, Octavianus and Antony, and, at the instance of the latter, engaged in a war with the Arabians. Antony, influenced by Cleopatra, appears to have made a catspaw of him in setting him to invade that country and punish the king for failing to discharge certain debts which he owed both to Judea and Egypt. Herod collected a strong army of horse

and foot, and marched to Diospolis, where a battle was soon fought, and the Arabians were defeated. But, as some of their forces shortly after invaded Celesyria, he followed them thither with the greater portion of his army, and formed a strong camp in the neighbourhood of Kanatha. Then, while he was throwing up intrenchments and taking all proper measures for security, many of the Jewish soldiers, inspirited by their first victory, were impatient to advance and attack the enemy. Herod, finding that they could no longer be prudently restrained, resolved to take advantage of their eagerness for combat, and lead them on to an impetuous charge. They accordingly dashed against the Arabian host with such fury, that they soon broke their ranks and threw them into confusion; but, when they thus appeared to have gained a speedy victory, it was presently changed to a defeat. The war had been stirred up by the infamous Cleopatra, who was secretly the enemy of both parties, and she placed within reach of their contending forces an army of observation, under her general, Athenio. This commander, seeing the rash movement of the Jews when they broke through the ranks of the Arabian army, fell on them unexpectedly with his own troops, and put them to flight. Herod, who was in another part of the field, now hastened to his beaten soldiers with reinforcements, but was too late to turn once more the fortune of the day; the Arabian and Egyptian forces were at all points victorious, and he was compelled to abandon his camp and retreat with heavy loss.

25. To add to the shock of this unexpected reverse, there happened about the same time in Judea a terrible earthquake, which threw down houses and also destroyed some thousands of people as well as cattle; and, as if these joint disasters were not enough to try to the utmost Herod's fortitude, news



soon after arrived that his friend Antony had experienced a crushing defeat at the battle of Actium. His own vassal throne, which seemed a little while before established in the greatest security, was now tottering beneath him, and it seemed to want but another breath of misfortune to effect his political ruin. When the Arabians heard of the earthquake and the great destruction which it had wrought in their enemies' country, they were just as much elated at the intelligence as the Jews were cast down. It naturally enough appeared to them as a divine interposition in their favour, and they were induced to insult their defeated adversaries and treat them as though they had been a herd of noisome beasts. When Herod sent ambassadors to them to make proposals and arrange terms of peace, they at once fell on those messengers and put them to death. They also pursued the Jews from one position to another, and harassed them in such a manner that they were greatly dispirited. Herod saw that it was desirable by some means to restore their courage, in order that they might fight another battle with a reasonable prospect of success. He, therefore, called the captains together, and delivered in their presence a vigorous and stirring oration, setting forth in the first place the origin of the war, then explaining the cause of their recent disaster, and assuring them that, with right on their side and advancing with good order and resolution, they would yet retrieve their fortunes and obtain a complete victory.

26. The Jewish soldiers were greatly encouraged by this oration, and, when Herod had offered the sacrifices appointed by the Law, they marched with the utmost bravery to meet the enemy. Having moved across the Jordan, he endeavoured to seize a certain fortress in order to strengthen his position; but, as the Arabians anticipated him in this

design, the opposing forces soon came to a battle. At first they only engaged in skirmishes, but after a while drew more closely together, and the Arabians were at length beaten and compelled to fall back. The Jews were now still more inspirited, and Herod, finding that the enemy had retired to their intrenchments for shelter, drew up all his forces and ventured to attack their camp. A fierce hand-to-hand engagement took place, and many fell on both sides ; but the Jews eventually succeeded in driving the Arabians from their outer works back into their central stronghold, which was soon after completely invested. Being thus unexpectedly hemmed in, they suffered in a little while for want of water and other necessities, and sent ambassadors to Herod to propose terms of peace ; but, knowing the straits that they were now in, and remembering how they had treated his own ambassadors, he refused to confer with them, and insisted on their making an unconditional surrender. Then, as no better prospect offered, about four thousand complied with these hard terms, and were carried away and treated as bondsmen. The rest held their ground for a while and then made a tremendous sally, hoping thus to conquer or die ; but they were weak for want of sustenance, and soon overpowered and forced to surrender. After this capitulation of the Arabian army, there was no further resistance to the Jewish demands ; the war was soon brought to a close, and Herod and his victorious soldiers returned in triumph to their own country.

27. Though he had overcome the Arabians, Herod's situation was still difficult and precarious owing to the terrible defeat and ruin which had befallen his friend Antony. Circumstances had prevented him from being present with Antony at Actium, but he was known to have sent him assist-

ance in the shape of provisions and money, so that the victorious Cæsar might now be disposed to regard him as an enemy. An Asmonean prince placed in such a critical position would have either fled the country or have drawn his forces together in Jerusalem, and plunged into an obstinate and hopeless war. Herod took a more manly and sensible course, and through the courage and candour which he displayed on this occasion peace was preserved. Leaving the government in the hands of his brother, Pheroras, he went boldly and met the great conqueror at Rhodes, and addressed him as follows :—“I had the greatest friendship for Antony, and did all I could to help him attain the government. I was not, indeed, in the army with him, because the Arabian war took me away, yet I sent him money and corn, which was but too little of what I ought to have done for him. For, if a man has a friend and benefactor, he should devote his whole soul and body and all his wealth to assist him, in which I confess that I have been too deficient. However, I am conscious of having done right so far as I have gone, and have not deserted him on his defeat at Actium, nor, on the evident change of his fortune, have I transferred my hopes from him to another. If not a worthy fellow-soldier, I was certainly a faithful counsellor of Antony, when I persuaded him to slay Cleopatra and seek reconciliation with you as the only means of saving his authority. None of this advice would he regard, for he preferred to take his own rash course, which has turned out disastrous for him, but advantageous for you. Now, therefore, if you judge me by my zeal in serving Antony according to your anger towards him, I cannot deny what I have done, and am not ashamed to own my regard for him. But, if you will put him out of the case, and only consider how I behave to my benefactors in general and what sort of a

friend I am, you will find by experience that I shall be the same to yourself, for it is but the changing of names, and the firmness of my friendship you will not dislike" (Ant. xv. vi. 6).

28. This speech of Herod and his perfectly frank and straightforward manner made a favourable impression on Octavianus, afterwards called Augustus Cæsar, who, moreover, remembered their former friendship and how he had been a partner with Antony in conferring on him the regal authority. He also, probably, called to mind the firm attachment of Antipater to his uncle Julius, and considered that Herod's recently taking part with Antony in preference to himself was only owing to geographical circumstances and the greater intimacy of their respective governments. Therefore, instead of regarding the vassal monarch as an enemy, he felt glad to renew the old friendly relations which had subsisted between them, and at once confirmed him in his position and authority. Not long after, Herod entertained Cæsar at Ptolemais, supplied his army with provisions and conducted him through the country when he was marching to invade Egypt. Then, on Cæsar's return from Egypt through Palestine, he obtained from Herod further liberal assistance, and, by way of recompense, made him a present of four hundred Galatian soldiers who had been Cleopatra's guards. He also restored to him that territory which Antony at her instance had detached from his dominions, and, besides, added to his kingdom Gadara, Hippos, Samaria, and the maritime cities, Gaza, Anthedon, Strato's Tower, and Joppa. At a subsequent period he further bestowed on him the region of Trachonitis, and made him one of the procurators of Syria. And we are told that there were but two men more exalted than Herod in all the vast Roman empire. "Cæsar preferred no one to Herod besides Agrippa, and



Agrippa had no greater friend than Herod except Cæsar. And when Herod had acquired such honour he begged of Cæsar a tetrarchy for his brother, Pheroras, on whom he bestowed himself a revenue of a hundred talents out of his own kingdom, that, in the event of his death, Pheroras might be provided for and not become beholden to his sons” (Ant., xv. v. 3). -

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## CHAPTER III.

## HIS CIVILISING RULE.

1. Herod reverses the aggressive policy of the Asmoneans.
5. The prevalence of brigandage and communism in Palestine.
7. He slays the robber Hezekias and breaks up his band.
8. Is in consequence summoned before the Sanhedrim on a charge of murder.
10. Is saved by the intervention of Sextus Cæsar.
11. Fights vigorously against the robbers of Galilee.
13. Banishes house-breakers.
14. Suppresses the robbers of Trachonitis, and sobecomes embroiled with the Arabians.
16. Offends the Jews by patronising Gentile sports.
18. A conspiracy to assassinate him in the amphitheatre.
19. Rebuilds the temple at Jerusalem.
21. Jewish fanatics take offence at the emblematic eagle on the gate.
23. His various other building and colonising enterprises.
25. Jewish jealousy excited by his generosity to foreigners.
26. His tour in Asia Minor with Agrippa.
27. Saves many famished and fever-stricken people by timely liberality.
30. Procures toleration and respect for the Jews in other countries.
31. Fails to reconcile the Nationalist party.
32. The prejudiced verdict of Josephus.
33. The mistake of Herod in making Jerusalem his capital.

HAVING seen how Herod, the Idumean general, was step by step honourably advanced to be ruler of Palestine, we will now proceed to consider the character of his government. Any ruler who is placed at the head of a nation largely infected with discontent and revolutionary turbulence, can only maintain his position by resolutely pursuing one of two courses; he must either undertake a work of stern repression, or commit himself to a policy of aggression. In other words, he will have to keep down with an iron hand the lawless

and dangerous classes which threaten society, or gratify their predatory instincts by leading them across the frontiers on a career of foreign conquest, so as to divert them from robbing their own countrymen. It is needless to say that the former is the more commendable and moral course, just as it is better for a parent to keep his children quiet and well-behaved at home by wholesome correction than to humour them in their selfish liberties, and maintain domestic peace only by sending them forth to annoy all the neighbours. The first Napoleon began to exercise his genius in the government of France by curbing the Parisian mob; and, had he been a man of high principle and well supported by other leaders of like character, he would have confined himself to this necessary police warfare, and would have restored order throughout the country, and left Europe undisturbed. By doing this, however, he could never have acquired much popularity with the revolutionists of France, and would have been branded all his days as a Corsican tyrant and oppressor. He preferred, therefore, to pursue a more unscrupulous policy, and by pandering to the spirit of chauvinism, seeking foreign quarrels, and leading forth the dangerous classes which the revolution had stirred up to prey on other countries, he covered himself with martial glory, and became the hero and idol of the turbulent Parisians. Had he persisted steadily in the former policy, he would, perhaps, have found it necessary, in suppressing insurrections, to shoot down at the utmost about fifty thousand French criminals and political incendiaries, and transport a like number to the colonies; whereas in the course which he actually did take, he is said to have caused the destruction of more than two millions of people; and the greater portion of these were honest people—industrious peasants and artisans, com-

pelled to take arms and fight when they only wanted to be let alone and enabled to earn their bread in peace. The third Napoleon started with the good resolve to maintain friendly relations with neighbouring states, but was soon induced, like his uncle, to depart from the strict line of duty, and seek popularity in the path of predatory adventure; that is, by sparing French rogues and shooting down honest foreigners, till he effected at length his own ruin and brought a terrible humiliation on his country.

2. The Jews of Palestine, under the Maccabees and their descendants, resembled in many respects the revolutionary population of France under the two Napoleons; they were full of ambitious dreams of future glory; had an overweening opinion of themselves and contempt for their neighbours; and could only be contented when led forth beyond their borders and engaged in propagandist and marauding enterprises. Those hereditary high-priests, who for upwards of a century attained sovereign power, so far from being a race of benignant spiritual shepherds, were really wolves in sheep's clothing; instead of doing their best to restrain the people and keep them in the path of righteousness and peace, they encouraged to the utmost their aggressive propensities. John Hyrcanus, the nephew of Judas Maccabeus, devoted the greater portion of his reign to invading and appropriating the territory of neighbouring states and compelling the conquered inhabitants to submit to the rite of circumcision. His son, Aristobulus, after slaying a rival brother, "made war against Iturea, and added a great part of it to Judea, forcing all the people who would continue there to be circumcised and live according to the Jewish law" (Ant., XIII. xi. 3). His other son, Alexander Janneus, on succeeding to the government, wrested away much territory from Arabia, Moab, Phoenicia,



and other countries, including several of their towns, such as Jamnia, Ashdod, Gaza, Anthedon, Raphia, and Pella, which last was "utterly destroyed because its inhabitants would not consent to change their religious rites for those of the Jews" (xv. 4). Aristobulus, the younger son of Alexander, took the high-priesthood from his brother by force of arms, and commenced to carry out the same aggressive policy which his father had pursued towards the Gentiles. It was brought as a principal charge against him, when Pompey arrived in Palestine, that he was not only a usurper, but had violated boundaries, made incursions into other countries, and even encouraged piracies at sea (Ant., xiv. iii. 2).

3. With the accession of the Idumean family to power in Judea, this rapacious policy of the Asmonean princes came to an end, and in fact was completely reversed. Herod and his kindred brought to the government of that country a higher political morality; the Jews were taught by them for the first time to keep within their borders and submit to international law. While his sacerdotal predecessors were ever stirring up strife and engaging in the most flagrant marauding enterprises, he, a rough soldier, in whom the love of aggression and conquest would have been more excusable, exerted himself to restrain the people's warlike inclinations, and bring about a long period of industry and peace. Unlike the greater portion of the world's famous soldiers, he always fought as a constable in behalf of order and law, and under the sanction of a higher authority. There is not a single recorded instance of his having ever encroached on the rights of his neighbours, or taken up arms merely to gratify his own personal ambition. On two occasions he led a military force into Arabia, yet not as a ruthless invader seeking for

glory and bent on the perpetration of wrong; it was under the direction of Antony that he first crossed the borders of that country to enforce the payment of debts which were due from its government; and, by permission of the presidents of Syria, he entered the territory a second time to chastise certain fugitive brigands who had there taken refuge. He had none of the territorial greed and lust of conquest for which Cleopatra and other contemporary rulers were distinguished; his dominions were enlarged from time to time, not by his own grasping ambition, but in the most honourable manner possible,—that is, by having additional provinces presented to him as a reward for his superior rule, and from a conviction expressed by the imperial authorities, that his kingdom was too small for his capacity.

4. It is true that Herod was all along a tributary king, and consequently was not so strongly tempted to appropriate his neighbours' territory and enter on a career of aggression as an independent sovereign would have been. But he had to deal with the same turbulent and revolutionary people that were under his Asmonean predecessors,—a people whose affections could only be gained by those rulers who fell in with their ambitious dreams, humoured their prejudices, and opened for them a field of conquest. And it is greatly to his credit that he never made a false show of patriotism and cunningly directed Jewish hostility against foreigners in order to divert it from his own government. He was too honest and too wise to seek popularity by pandering to the aggressive spirit of a large portion of his subjects and encouraging them in the perpetration of wrong. The entire Nationalist party were dead against him, and were seeking, by every possible means, to subvert his throne, some of them even attempting his assassination; but he

had only to set up the old standard of Judas Maccabeus, and proclaim a holy war against idolaters, and that host of enemies about him would have been speedily turned into friends who would have greeted him with joyful hosannas. Having married into the Asmonean family and taken up their rule, the times were not altogether unpropitious for identifying himself with their sentiments and continuing their policy, seeing the troubles and divisions which were now distracting the Roman world. There was no question about his military capacity; and, as the Jews with an able leader were prepared to face any odds, he might have purchased with much bloodshed the independence which they wanted, for a few years at least, even without the aid of a Parthian alliance. In that case he would have been a most popular prince, a Heaven-sent deliverer, and they would have quite overlooked his Idumean parentage; indeed, the probability is, that some of those rabbins who were skilful in constructing fictitious genealogies would have made him out to be not only a true Israelite, but a genuine descendant of David. Certainly, the glorious success which he might have achieved against the Romans would not have been of very long duration; their armies would have hemmed him in at last, and captured all his cities one after another, and he himself would have been captured and slain. But the infatuated survivors of all the ruin and destruction thus brought on their country would have still looked back on him as a true Jewish hero, and, though he might have sacrificed in reckless and obstinate warfare more than half of their race, would have said not a word of his blood-guiltiness. It was because he took the opposite and wiser course of maintaining peace, keeping the nation within proper bounds, and slaying a few for the salvation of many, that the miserable fanatics whom

he held back from rushing headlong over a precipice, had so much to say of his barbarity and cruelty.

5. As provincial governor, tetrarch, and king, Herod had altogether an experience of nearly forty-five years in the difficult task of maintaining law and order in Palestine. During this long period of rule, one of the chief annoyances which he had to contend with was the prevalence of brigandage in various parts of the country. Bands of Jewish robbers had become very numerous, being, to a great extent, an evil relic of the Asmonean conquests. Under the succession of warlike priest-kings, the most active of the population were frequently gathered into armies and led across the borders to ravage the cities of idolatrous Gentiles. Then, when peace was at length restored, a large number of those adventurers had acquired such a liking for organised robbery that they preferred to rob on their own account rather than return to the quiet habits of industrial life. Moreover, the Jews, who could muster enthusiastic armies when their passions were stirred to engage in a war against another people, never took any pains to keep up an efficient military police. And brigandage was not in their eyes an unendurable evil which cried aloud for suppression ; they were rather disposed to regard it as a sacred institution derived from their predatory forefathers who fought under Joshua to possess the Promised Land. Every robber chief, as a cover for his evil deeds, made a loud profession of religion and patriotism, and considered himself another Gideon or Judas Maccabeus, specially raised up to chastise the heathen and effect the redemption of Israel. It is a remarkable feature of the Hebrew prophets, that, while they are constantly calling down the judgment of Heaven on the heads of innocent sculptors, they scarcely ever utter a word of condemnation against the terrible misdeeds of



robbers. They undoubtedly abhorred petty theft and dishonesty in trade; but the existence of marauding bands in various parts of the country, and especially on the borders, did not strike them as being a natural transgression of the deepest dye, against which they were called on to lift up their voice and cry aloud. During the Asmonean period, if any honest man had ventured to bring a small image or a prohibited animal within the sacred walls of Jerusalem, there would have been such an outburst of horror on the part of the inhabitants that the offender would have run a very great risk of being stoned to death. But a circumcised robber, who was considered patriotic and liberal to the priests and to the poor, had no molestation to fear in the neighbourhood of the Holy City; indeed, if he made a successful swoop on the property of idolatrous Gentiles, he might enter its gates well laden with spoil and depend on being welcomed with much honour.

6. Even those honest ascetic Jews who led a peaceful life, and had no sympathy with robbery or other acts of violence, were not filled with any virtuous indignation at the existence of brigandage in their country, nor induced to exert themselves greatly for its suppression. Since the time of the Maccabees, a belief had become prevalent that the end of the world and the general resurrection were at hand, which caused many people to feel wholly indifferent about the acquisition and conservation of wealth. In the existing state of things, as revealed to them by cabalistic interpretations of Scripture, the old provident habits of mankind were unseasonable and altogether out of place. The world had become, in their estimation, very much like a burning house, or a sinking ship, in which it was prudent to abandon everything, and study only how to get away with their bare lives. Then, if any man under

these circumstances, were to rob or oppress them, it would be folly to think of making resistance, since it would be only so much the worse for him, and so much the better for them, at the coming day of retribution. Many of the Jews holding these sentiments were also practical communists; they disregarded the principles of justice, which every magistrate acted upon, and contended strongly for human equality. It was not against the robber, but against the rich man, that their indignation was chiefly directed; a poor thief appeared to them much less of a sinner than those who by honest industry and thrift had brought lands into cultivation, built houses, and accumulated wealth. And they thought that the possessors of property, instead of giving any occasion to their indigent neighbours to steal from them, should anticipate their wants, and lose no time in selling off and dividing their goods and estates, so that all might receive equal shares and therewith have contentment.

7. Herod was thus born and brought up in Judea when it might almost be said, that one-half of the Jewish population was infected with the spirit of brigandage, and the other half with the spirit of communism. Happily, he had himself no sympathy with either of these anarchical principles, for he had sensible parents, who must have given him a wholesome religious and moral training, or he would not have manifested such a strong affection for them through life, nor have so cherished their memory after death. We are told that he was "a youth of great mind," and his father, whom Julius Cæsar had recently appointed procurator, had so much confidence in his courage and ability as to send him at the early age of twenty-five to be governor of Galilee. He was fully equal to this important charge, and soon gave proof of an earnest disposition to do his duty in reckoning with the brigands who infested

that province. "Finding there was one Hezekias, the captain of a band of robbers, who overran the neighbouring parts of Syria, he seized him and slew him, with many of his marauding troop. On account of this action he was greatly esteemed by the Syrians, for they had long desired to have their country freed from the robbers, and now what they desired was accomplished. So they sang songs in his commendation in their cities and villages for having thus procured them deliverance and the secure enjoyment of their possessions. He also by this means became known to Sextus Cæsar, who was a kinsman of the great Cæsar, and now president of Syria" (Ant., xiv. ix. 12).

8. But, though the youthful governor, by his vigorous action in rooting out this robber community, gave great satisfaction to the Syrians and to Sextus Cæsar, he caused deep offence to the Jews. They had for some time been jealous of the growing influence of Antipater and his sons, and were now highly indignant on learning that one of these upstart Idumeans had presumed to slay Hezekias and his followers, all genuine Israelites, just because they were waging a little war on their own account against the neighbouring heathen. Appealing to Hyrcanus, the ethnarch and high-priest, they contended that Herod had, in this proceeding, "transgressed the Law, which had forbidden the slaying of any man, even though a wicked man, unless he should first be condemned by the Sanhedrin; yet had he been so insolent as to do this without any authority whatever. The mothers also of those who had been slain came to Jerusalem, and continued every day in the Temple, entreating Hyrcanus and the people that Herod should be brought before the Sanhedrin to answer for what he had done." Hyrcanus, instead of sternly upbraiding the women for having encouraged their

sons to lead a predatory life, and assuring them that a provincial governor was fully empowered to deal out summary justice to captured brigands who subsisted by crime, weakly yielded to their clamour, and actually summoned Herod to present himself for trial before the Sanhedrin on a charge of murder. Antipater, however, sent a message to his son at the same time, and desired him, in complying with this unreasonable summons of the ethnarch, to come, not as a private man, to Jerusalem, but as a ruler, with a guard for his personal security. Sextus Cæsar also wrote a strong letter to Hyrcanus, setting forth that Herod had done nothing beyond his duty in extirpating the troublesome robbers of Galilee, and commanding him to see that the young governor was duly acquitted.

9. Confident in the support of powerful friends, and surrounded by a body of faithful guards, Herod in a little while came and presented himself before the Sanhedrin, and there ensued one of the most remarkable trials recorded in history. The seventy elders had expected the accused governor to come and prostrate himself at their feet in abject humility, and were quite taken aback on seeing him stand before them bold and erect at the head of his guards. For some time a deep silence prevailed; the grave elders looked at each other in astonishment, scarcely knowing how to proceed, while neither of the accusers ventured to open his mouth. At length Shammai,—the famous head of the school of strict Pharisees, and rival of Hillel,—rose, and spoke as follows:—"O Hyrcanus our king, and you, my fellow-counsellors, I have never before known such a case as this, nor do I suppose that any of you can name its parallel, that one who is called on to take his trial at our hands ever stood in such a manner before us. For it is customary with every one who comes to be tried by this San-



hedrin to present himself in a submissive manner, with his hair dishevelled, and in a mourning garment ; but this admirable man, Herod, who is accused of murder, and required to answer such a heavy charge, stands here, clothed in purple and with his hair finely trimmed, and with his armed men about him, that if we shall convict him by our Law, he may forthwith turn on us and slay us, and, by overbearing justice, himself escape death ” (Ant., xiv. ix. 4).

10. When Hyrcanus saw that the Sanhedrin were desirous to pronounce sentence of death, only that they were under a present apprehension of bringing punishment on themselves, he postponed the trial, and then sent privately to Herod, advising him to get away quickly from the city. He accordingly retired with his guards to Damascus, and, after holding a consultation there with Sextus Cæsar, resolved that, in the event of being called on again to appear before the Sanhedrin, he would disregard the summons. The Jewish elders declared themselves highly indignant at the contempt which had been shown for their authority, but neither they nor Hyrcanus had any power either to prevent or to punish it, while Herod was soon in a position which enabled him to deliver judgment against his unjust judges. Sextus Cæsar compensated him, both for his good services and the insult which he had received, by making him general of the army of Celesyria. He now gave out hints of intending to march on Jerusalem, which caused some alarm there ; and it is related that his father and elder brother actually went to meet him and dissuade him from carrying out such a vindictive design. It is quite certain that it could never have been seriously entertained by him, nor would it have been permitted by Sextus Cæsar ; yet it is by no means improbable that he made threats to

that effect, and so produced in Jerusalem at the time a salutary impression.

11. Herod had now, by the simple discharge of his duty, become an object of intense hatred to all the predatory bands of Palestine; he had shown a determination to suppress their lawless enterprises, and they were ever after his irreconcilable foes. When he was eventually raised to the Jewish throne, and came from Rome to Ptolemais to take possession of his kingdom, the honest people of Galilee had a favourable recollection of him and gave him a hearty welcome, but he met with uncompromising hostility from the robbers, who had good reasons to make a show of patriotism and fight in behalf of the Asmonean cause. We are told that, when he marched on Sepphoris, the garrisons of Antigonus withdrew and retired before him, but there still remained other enemies who were likely to trouble his rear. Therefore he "went thence, and resolved to destroy those robbers who dwelt in caves and did much mischief in the country. And he sent a troop of horse and three companies of foot against them where they had a refuge and stronghold near Arbela. Then, forty days after, he came himself with the rest of the forces, and, as the enemy sallied forth boldly, his left wing gave way; but he hastened with a body of men to their support, and soon rallied them and overcame all resistance. He also pressed hard on his retreating foes, and pursued them as far as the river Jordan. So he brought over to him all Galilee, excepting those who dwelt in the caves" (Ant., xiv. xv. 4).

12. Not long after, we are told that he made a vigorous effort to extirpate a large body of these subterranean foes. "As for Herod, he went in haste against the robbers that were in the caves, and, while he did this, sent Silo away to Ventidius,

The caves were among mountains exceedingly abrupt, and their entrances were encompassed with sharp rocks. The robbers were thus strongly fortified and well concealed in the earth with all their families. But Herod, in order to reach them, caused certain strong cages to be made; and these, being bound about with chains and filled with armed men, were then let down by a windlass from the top of the precipice. The men thus let down took with them provisions, and were also furnished with long hooks, that they might so drag forth from the caves the robbers who resisted them, and fling them down and crush them below. But, when the cages were let down with much difficulty to the openings of the caves, the robbers were still hidden far out of reach, and neither dare they come forth and fight. Then the soldiers, being weary and vexed with long waiting, girt on their armour and entered the caves, where they soon encountered those who were hidden, and slew many with their darts, while others they dragged forth and hurled down below on the rocks. Then there was great terror and much lamentation among those who remained; but, as Herod promised to spare all who would freely surrender, some of them hastened to do so, trusting in his word. And, when the soldiers had rested for the night, the same mode of assault was carried on the next day, and they went further into the caves, and, finding therein much combustible material, at length set them on fire. Now, there was one robber who held out long with his wife and seven children, and these begged him to surrender for the saving of their lives. But he sternly refused their request, and, killing them one after another at the mouth of the cave, threw their dead bodies down below. He then prepared to follow them, but, before doing so, reproached Herod greatly with the meanness of his family,

although he had now got to be king. Herod vainly stretched forth his hand and offered the man every security for his life; he resolutely slew himself, as he had before slain his family, rather than submit to bondage. And thus the caves were entirely cleared, and the whole band of robbers were either destroyed or subdued" (Ant., XIV. XV. 5).

13. If Herod had not had a strong army with him on this occasion, he might again have been summoned before the Sanhedrin and charged with murder for rooting out this swarm of pestilent rogues, who considered themselves patriots, and professed to be repeating in a small way the feats of the Maccabees. But he was now marching on Jerusalem in earnest, to fulfil his former threats and treat the wretched elders themselves as a den of thieves. The judgment came at length to these corrupt judges; the last of the Asmonean priest-kings disappeared, and he stood the undisputed ruler of Palestine, to the sorrow and dismay of all those who subsisted by plunder and fraud. A ceaseless war was carried on against the predatory tribes in every province during the whole period of his reign. In order to check house-breaking more effectually, he enacted a law that those who were convicted of this crime should be banished from the country. We are not told to what place they were exiled; but, as he had no power to send criminals out of his own dominions, it is probable that they were deported to some penal colony in the Trans-Jordan provinces. In any case, the arrangement gave great offence to the bigoted Jewish rabbins, because it was looked upon as an innovation and a departure from the Levitical law, which commanded that every thief should make restitution to the owner either in kind or in service. In short, the penalty of banishment, however well carried out and wholesome in its effects, was con-



demned as being both illegal and excessively severe.

14. It was Herod's aim, not merely to punish people who were addicted to robbery, but to permanently reclaim them from that criminal course and put them in the way of living honestly. To do this it was sometimes absolutely necessary to remove them from their old haunts and vicious associations, and place them in more salutary circumstances. The bands of cave robbers that he had to deal with, as well as the city burglars, could not have been reformed unless transported to a distance and there kept in a position of compulsory servitude. On one occasion he seems to have had thrown on his hands an entire province of brigands, so that banishment in their case was impracticable, and in trying to reclaim them he was eventually involved in much trouble. We are told that "the inhabitants of Trachonitis, after Cæsar had taken the country from Zenodorus and added it to Herod's dominions, had no longer permission to rob, but were forced to plough the land and live quietly, which was not to them agreeable; and, when they did till the ground, it produced little fruit. However, the king would not suffer them to rob, and so they gave up that unjust way of living, and the king obtained much credit for compelling them to live at peace with their neighbours. But when he went to Rome to accuse his son, Alexander, and commit Antipater to Cæsar's protection, the Trachonites spread a report that he was dead, and thereupon revolted from his government and betook themselves to their old way of living by robbery. The king's commanders, however, subdued them during his absence, when about forty of the principal robbers, taking alarm at those who were captured, left the country and retired into Arabia. Sylleus, the Arabian prince, being then at enmity

with Herod through not being permitted to marry his sister, Salome, gave them a secure refuge. So, under his protection, they went forth beyond the border and ravaged, not only Judea, but also the country of Celesyria. When Herod returned from Rome, he saw how his dominions had suffered from their incursions, and, since he could not follow them, he seized on their relations in Trachonitis and slew them as hostages, appealing at the same time to the presidents of Syria. The robbers, who had increased to about one thousand, now became worse in their ravages, and slew all they caught in Herod's dominions, so that these acts of retaliation resembled a war. Herod now, being greatly incensed, demanded that the fugitive robbers should be given up, and also the sum of sixty talents returned which he had lent through Sylleus to the king of Arabia. On the matter being brought before the presidents of Syria, Sylleus denied that the robbers were in Arabia, and desired to put off the payment of the money. He at length agreed, however, that the money should be paid in thirty days' time, and that they should deliver up each other's fugitive subjects reciprocally. Now, as to Herod, there was not one of the other's subjects sheltering in his dominions either as doing injustice or on any other account, but it was proved that the Arabians had among them the robbers who fled from Trachonitis. When the day appointed for settlement was passed without Sylleus performing any part of his agreement, and he was gone to Rome, Herod demanded the surrender of the robbers and the discharge of the debt. Then, as these requests were not complied with, by the permission of Saturninus and Volumnius, the presidents of Syria, he proceeded himself to execute judgment by force. Leading an army into Arabia, when he came to the stronghold of the robbers which was

called Raepta, he captured them all and demolished the place. But, as there came to the robbers' assistance an Arabian force under the command of Naceb, a battle took place, in which a few of Herod's soldiers, and Naceb, and about twenty of his soldiers were slain, while the rest took to flight. So, when Herod had brought the robbers to punishment, he placed three thousand Idumeans in Trachonitis, and by their means restrained the rest of the tribe. He also sent an account of his proceedings to the commanders in Phœnicia, and demonstrated that he had done only what was right in punishing the guilty Arabians, which, when they came to make a strict inquiry, was found to be true. But Arabian messengers were posted off to Sylleus at Rome to inform him of what had been done; and, as is usual in such a case, they exaggerated everything. Sylleus had already managed to make the acquaintance of Cæsar, and, being about the palace when he heard of these complications, he put on a mourning garment, and went in and told Cæsar that Arabia was afflicted with war. With tears in his eyes, he represented that Herod with his army was laying the country waste; that Naceb, his familiar friend and kinsman, and two thousand five hundred principal men of Arabia, were slain; and that the riches of Raepta were carried away. He added that he would not himself have left the country if he had not felt sure of Cæsar providing that peace should be maintained, and that, had he been there, the war would not have been to Herod's advantage" (Ant., xvi. ix. 1-3).

15. When Cæsar heard from Sylleus this terrible report, he made inquiry of some of Herod's friends who had recently come to Rome as to whether it was a fact that he had led an army into Arabia. They at once admitted this to be so; and Cæsar, without inquiring further into the circum-

stances of the case, was then greatly provoked, and he immediately addressed to Herod a sharp letter. He therein told him that, whereas he used to consider him a friend, he should now, in consequence of these lawless proceedings, have to regard him as a subject. Sylleus also wrote to the Arabians, informing them that Herod's invasion of the country had given great offence to Cæsar, and that, in fact, he was now in complete disgrace. The Arabians were thus encouraged to prolong their resistance to him; the people of Trachonitis also rose up against the Idumean garrison, and resumed their old practice of robbery, which they thought could now be carried on with impunity. Herod had to bear all this insolence of his enemies for a while with much patience, for he felt that his mouth was closed and that his hands were tied. Obodas, the king of Arabia, was dead, and he, the king of Judea, was not permitted to act, so that on the border of the two countries there was nothing but confusion and anarchy. He determined, however, to explain his conduct fully to Cæsar, and seek a reconciliation with him by sending to Rome his able minister, Nicolaus of Damascus. This orator and Sylleus now confronted each other in the presence of Cæsar, each making his own statement of the case; but Nicolaus succeeded in completely upsetting the story of Sylleus, and in convicting him, not only of deliberate falsehood, but of several scandalous crimes. This counter charge was, moreover, directly confirmed by the testimony of Arabian witnesses, so that in the end Sylleus was found guilty, and condemned to death for his turpitude and the mischief he had occasioned; and Cæsar expressed very great regret that through him he had been for some time estranged from his friend. He also proposed now to add Arabia to Herod's dominions, but, after some consideration, thought

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that he would be thus too much burdened, as he was now advanced in years and his relation with the sons appointed to succeed him was far from satisfactory.

16. So far as his Jewish subjects were concerned, Herod endeavoured to reform them in two ways: by convincing them that robbery, which they were disposed to tolerate, was really a great crime; and that the making of images, which seemed such an abomination in their eyes, was simply an innocent work of art. Indeed, a revision of their moral code was quite as needful in the latter instance as in the former, since the iconophobia, which they so cherished, was frequently their chief incentive, not only to rob, but to murder the neighbouring Gentiles, who had done them no wrong. And the most fanatical among them were always prepared to find in the exhibition of any emblematic images, such as the Roman military ensigns, a justifiable ground for insurrection. It was desirable, too, that they should be educated out of other ancient prejudices, in order that they might come to live on amicable terms with the rest of mankind. They were favoured by Herod, to a certain extent, above all the other inhabitants of Palestine; they obtained many privileges, and were always treated as the superior and dominant race. They could erect their synagogues, and practise their peculiar religious observances in every Gentile city of Galilee, Samaria, and the other provinces, but would on no account permit a congregation of Gentile worshippers to assemble in Jerusalem. Their intense bigotry was so far patiently borne with; but, if they could not tolerate other systems of worship in the neighbourhood of their holy city, they might, at least, have been expected to tolerate non-Jewish diversions. Herod had many Grecian and Syrian subjects, his army was largely recruited from those

races; and they were passionately fond of the famous periodical games that were introduced into Asia by the Greek conquest. He himself and many other Hellenising Jews took a hearty interest in these games and competitions, which consisted chiefly of music, racing, wrestling, and combats with wild beasts. They resembled, in some respects, our modern military sports; their object was to give young men courage, skill, and agility in warfare. There was no disgraceful gambling connected with them, nor any Bacchanalian orgies, nor gladiatorial barbarity, nor did they in any way conflict with the Jewish law. Indeed, there was much in these periodical gatherings of a healthy tendency, which made them worthy of Government patronage, since they brought together all races and all classes of people in friendly intercourse. If Jew and Gentile could not agree in any way to have communion of worship, it was all the more desirable that they should so far forget their differences as to fraternise in the communion of sport.

17. Herod was, therefore, only acting the part of an enlightened and generous sovereign in erecting near Jerusalem a large amphitheatre for the exhibition of athletic contests and other diversions. He undoubtedly knew that the prejudice which many Jewish people entertained against these Gentile sports was as strong as in the time of the Maccabees. But, if they disliked the performances at the amphitheatre, they were not compelled to witness them, and they might surely keep away from the place, minding their own business, and not interfere with the enjoyment of others. This was just what a number of fanatical Jews could by no means be persuaded to do; they did not themselves like, and were neither willing that their neighbours should take pleasure in, any wrestling,

racing, and wolf-killing exhibitions, which had not been enjoined by the Levitical law. We are told that on one occasion a party of these zealots were present in Herod's amphitheatre for the sole purpose of creating a disturbance, and that they even formed a conspiracy for his assassination. They began by making an outcry against the trophies or suits of armour taken in battle, which being set up round about, according to custom, they fancied were images and objects of idolatrous worship. Herod, on learning the cause of their displeasure, endeavoured, in the most kind and condescending manner, to convince them of their mistake. He called to him some of the most distinguished Jews present, and got them to examine closely the suits of armour, while he took them to pieces and showed underneath the bare wooden supports. This clear proof that they were not images, as had been falsely supposed, completely reassured the greater portion of the Jewish spectators, and caused some little amusement; they saw how certain fanciful people were prone to conjure up harm which did not exist, and were convinced that the king, in introducing these exhibitions, had no insidious designs against their religion.

18. But the fanatical conspirators were still determined to assassinate Herod on the first opportunity, and had actually taken an oath for that purpose. They visited the amphitheatre with concealed daggers, hoping to kill him, or at least some of his attendants, even at the risk of their own lives. He was, however, well on his guard against any plots of this kind, and had taken the precaution to scatter among the spectators a number of shrewd detectives. One of these officers got into conversation with a member of the conspiracy, and handled him so cleverly, that he presently turned informer, and in this way the whole plot was revealed. The king

had not yet arrived, but his guards were communicated with, and they promptly arrested all the conspirators and led them away to the palace. So far from attempting to deny their guilt, they proudly confessed everything, declared that they were engaged in a holy and pious cause, for which they were fully prepared to lay down their lives. Indeed, they felt assured that they were fighting for their religion, and were certain to gain a crown of martyrdom. The sooner death came the better, as it had no terror for them; and, with the view to crushing their enthusiasm and that of their sympathisers, they were sentenced to suffer a painful death. Meanwhile, some of the populace who approved of the design of these desperate assassins seized on the poor informer, slew him, cut him to pieces limb from limb, and gave his flesh to the dogs. This revengeful crime was witnessed by a large number of citizens in broad day, yet none of them now dare give any evidence about it for fear that they should suffer the same fate. Herod, however, managed at length to get from a few women sufficient testimony to convict the perpetrators of this outrage, and they were arrested, brought to trial, and so severely punished by him that, to leave none to avenge them, their whole families were destroyed. It is not easy to justify such rigour; but he was under great provocation at the time, and it was necessary for the public welfare, as much as his own safety, to overawe the zealots of the city, for, had they succeeded in taking his life, the whole nation would have been directly involved in a calamitous war. After crushing this band of conspirators, we are told that he "fortified himself in a more secure manner, and resolved to encompass the multitude in every way lest seditious attempts of this kind should end in an open rebellion. Therefore he made defences for his palace, and erected a strong fortress overlooking



the Temple, which was called Antonias. He also fortified the city of Samaria, changing its name to Sebaste, and built citadels at Gaba, Heshbon, Perea, and Strabo's Tower, which was afterwards called Cæsarea, while he was ever devising further measures for his security, and setting guards over the whole nation, that seditious people might not defy his authority and raise a revolt, as they were ever liable to do when any commotion occurred. He also made such arrangements with his secret police that, in the event of any disturbance arising, he might soon be informed of it, so as to effect its immediate suppression. And, while building the fortifications of Samaria, he contrived to bring thither besides people of the neighbourhood, many of those who, as soldiers, had taken part in his wars, and whom he also made fellow-citizens with the rest" (Ant., xv. viii 5).

19. It is surprising how Herod persevered all his life long to conciliate the turbulent Jews of Jerusalem when most rulers of that period, after having full experience of their irreconcilable enmity, would have been disposed to abandon them altogether, or subdue them with persistent coercion. The magnificent new Temple which he erected was a present thrown away upon them; they did not at all deserve it, were not in the least grateful for it, and, being ever bent on a revolutionary struggle with the Romans, could not long save it from destruction. When he contemplated building this Temple, and had formed his plans for that purpose, he made the following address to the assembled elders: "I think I need not speak to you, my countrymen, about the various building works that have been carried on since I came to the throne. They have been performed in such a manner as to bring more security to you than credit to myself; for I have endeavoured in the most difficult times

to supply your needs, and the public works erected are not so much calculated to preserve me as yourselves from injury. And I believe that, with God's assistance, I have advanced the Jewish people to a degree of prosperity which they never attained before. With respect to the many new buildings erected in your own cities, and in those other cities which we have recently acquired, it seems a needless task to enumerate them, since they are well known to yourselves. But I am now about to commence another work of the greatest piety and excellence that can possibly be undertaken by us, and will now declare it to you. Our fathers, when they returned from Babylon, built this Temple to God, yet it is not so high by sixty cubits as the first Temple that was built by Solomon. This deficiency was not the fault of our fathers, for the measurement was determined by Cyrus and Darius, the son of Hystaspes; and being subject to the Persians, and afterwards to the Macedonians, they could not follow the original model of the structure nor raise it to its ancient altitude. But, since I am now, by God's will, your governor, and have had peace a long while, and gained great wealth and large revenues, and—what is of more consequence—am at perfect amity with the Romans, who, if I may say so, are the rulers of the world, I will endeavour to correct the deficiency which originated from our former subjection, and make a thankful return to God for the blessings received from him by rendering his Temple as complete as possible." This speech somewhat alarmed many of the people, as being unexpected by them; and, because the undertaking seemed impracticable, it disheartened rather than encouraged them. For they were afraid that he would pull down the whole edifice, and then not be able to complete the rebuilding; and this danger appeared to them very great, and

the vastness of the work such as could hardly be accomplished. The king, however, encouraged them, and told them that he would not pull down the Temple till all the materials were got ready for completely rebuilding it. And he adhered to this promise, and prepared a thousand wagons that were to bring stones for the building, and selected ten thousand of the most skilful workmen, and bought a thousand garments for the priests, and had some of them taught the mason's art, and others the art of a carpenter, and began to build only when everything was well prepared for the work" (Ant., xv. xi. 1, 2).

20. Having presented to the nation a magnificent Temple such as had formerly been erected by Solomon, Herod thought that he might venture on using the same kind of decorations for the sacred edifice without causing offence. He did not place ornamental oxen and lions within the Temple, as Solomon had done, but set up over the entrance-gate a large golden eagle, as emblematic of the protection afforded them by imperial Rome. "Since he owed his greatness to Rome," says Keim, "he made it the object of his life to remove the gulf of prejudices which divided the East—and especially Palestine—from the West for hundreds and thousands of years." One of the most inveterate of these prejudices was the Jewish hatred of images and pictures, which had frequently incited them to perpetrate outrages and engage in sanguinary riots; and if they could only have been educated out of their superstition and reconciled to the imperial symbol, it would have been well for their future peace. But some of the most bigoted zealots, when they beheld the imperial eagle on the Temple gate, experienced a violent outburst of iconophobia; they beheld in it what our Indian sepoys at the time of the Mutiny saw in their

greased cartridges, an insidious attempt to undermine their religion. We are told that in Jerusalem were two rabbis deeply learned in the law, "Judas, the son of Sepphoris, and Matthias, the son of Margalous. And a large concourse of young men were accustomed to gather round them to hear their exposition of the law. When these rabbis heard of the king being dangerously ill, they threw out hints to their disciples that it was now a fit time to defend the cause of God and pull down what had been set up contrary to their religion. For they considered it unlawful to have about the Temple either images or faces, or the representation of any living thing. Now the king had put up a golden eagle over the great gate of the Temple, and the rabbis exhorted their disciples to pluck it down, telling them that, if they so incurred any danger, it was a glorious thing to die for the Law. For the soul, they said, was immortal, and how all would have eternal happiness who so laid down their lives, while those who preferred to die naturally were ignorant, mean-spirited, and without a proper love for their souls. While they were speaking in this strain, it was rumoured that the king was dying, and the young men, in consequence, ventured with great boldness on their enterprise. At mid-day, when many were engaged in the Temple services, they climbed to the roof and let themselves down with thick ropes and cut away the eagle from above the gate. This was presently told to the captain of the Temple, who came running with a band of soldiers, and caught forty of the young men and brought them before the king. Herod asked them at first whether they had really been so audacious as to cut down the eagle. They confessed that they had done so. He next asked them at whose command they had so acted. They replied, At the command of the law of their country;



and, when he further asked them how they could be so cheerful when they would soon be punished with death, they answered, because they should enjoy greater happiness after they were dead" (War, i. xxxiii. 2, 3).

21. These misguided youths obtained the martyrdom which they expected and desired, they were speedily put to death; the actual perpetrators of the outrage, together with the two rabbis who instigated it, suffered an agonising death. It seems a pity that they could not have been exiled to Egypt or some other country, where they might have joined a Dispersionist synagogue, and acquired larger views of religion and a more liberal interpretation of the Law. Herod had no place within his dominions convenient for their banishment, and he thought it necessary to make such a fearful example of them as should effectually deter other fanatics from following their seditious example; for thousands were known to sympathise with them, and, if their bold attempt at hurling down the imperial eagle had not been speedily checked, the whole city would have been in a state of insurrection. Indeed, a sanguinary outbreak was actually made soon after by the friends of these rioters, when the government of the country fell into the hands of the more feeble and irresolute Archelaus. The king, on his sick-bed, called together some of the principal Jews, and, after recounting how much he had done for the nation, especially in the erection of this splendid Temple, declared that he deemed it hard that some of the people should now choose to aggravate his sufferings by putting this affront on him, while they were at the same time committing sacrilege. He considered the high-priest Mattathias culpable, not from having actually encouraged the outrage, but from failing in his duty to prevent it by coun-

teracting the mischievous teaching of the two rabbis ; and he accordingly deposed him, and put into the office his brother-in-law, Joazar.

22. It was Herod's aim to educate the Jews of Palestine so that they should come to resemble their more Hellenised brethren of Alexandria and of Antioch, and be less exclusive and also less antagonistic to the Gentile world. He was, in fact, desirous of correcting their prejudices, removing their race-hatred, moderating their intolerance, and saving them, if possible, from being incited and urged on to a ruinous war. Those daring youths who hurled down the eagle from the Temple-gate would, if let alone, have been the foremost men to assail the Roman armies in the hope of driving every other eagle and image out of Palestine. And we see, by their own behaviour and by the subsequent conduct of their sympathetic friends, what an intractable set of revolutionists the king had to deal with, and how his well-intended efforts to promote the general welfare of the nation met with constant discouragement. He did his best with superior wisdom to save the zealots of Jerusalem by turning them aside from their mad course, and they hated him intensely ; whereas, if he had gone recklessly with them, and led them on to certain destruction, they would have extolled him to the skies. There were people somewhat turbulent and hard to govern in other parts of the Roman empire, but none that would compare with these fanatical disciples of the Maccabees, since, even if they had no real grievance to complain of, they were always prepared to find a cause for insurrection in purely imaginary wrongs ; and, so far from being deterred by judicial punishment of the severest kind, many studiously provoked what they considered persecution, and rejoiced in it as the greatest good fortune. To make a tremendous riot in the name

of religion, and so come into collision with the authorities who were responsible for maintaining order, that suffering should be experienced, and perhaps death eventually result, was, in their estimation, the surest means of obtaining an exalted position in Paradise.

23. When Herod, in the prime of life, had overcome his enemies in war and firmly established himself in the government of Palestine, he completely turned his sword into a trowel and his spear into a ploughshare. More useful building and colonising work was accomplished by him than by the whole of his Asmonean predecessors. One of the greatest of his many enterprises for promoting the material welfare of the population was the construction of the new city and harbour of Cæsarea. "Upon his observation of a place near the sea called Strabo's Tower, that was suitable for a port, he set about planning a magnificent city there, and with great diligence erected many houses of white stone. He adorned it with palaces and other large edifices, which afforded habitation for the people, and, above all, supplied it with a good haven that was protected from the waves of the sea. Its size was not less than that of the Piræus at Athens, and it had towards the city a double station for ships. It was very substantially built, and surprisingly so, when we take into account the awkwardness of the situation and the materials having to be brought from a great distance. Herod chose the spot from its lying between Joppa and Dora, which are smaller maritime towns, and unfit for havens by reason of the strong south winds which beat upon them, and, rolling the sands against the shore, will not allow vessels to shelter there. To prevent the inconvenience of drifting sand, he excavated a large portion of ground sufficient to make a haven wherein ships might lie in safety.

This he effected by sinking huge stones, some of them as much as fifty feet long, eighteen broad and nine deep in twenty fathoms of water. The mole which he thus built by the sea was two hundred feet wide, the side opposed to the sea was called Procymatia, or, the breaker of the waves; the other side had on it a wall with several towers, the largest of which was named after Cæsar's son-in-law, Drusus. There were also a great number of arches, where the mariners lodged, and a quay, or landing-place, which ran round the entire haven, and formed a most agreeable promenade. The entrance to the port was on the north side, which was the least troubled with winds. On the left hand as you entered was a round turret, made very strong to resist the force of the waves, while on the right hand stood, joined together, two immense stones. All along the circular haven were buildings of polished stone; a temple was also erected, which was visible far out at sea, and it had two large statues, one representing Cæsar and the other Rome. The city itself was called Cæsarea, and was built of fine materials, even the vaults and cellars were well constructed. Some of the sewers ran at even distances to the sea, but one went obliquely and bound all the rest together, so that the drainage was carried off, for, when the tide came up it washed the city clean. A theatre was also built there, and in the south quarter, behind the port, an amphitheatre, which was capable of holding a vast number of people, and well situated for a prospect of the sea" (Ant., xv. ix. 6).

24. Herod erected several other cities in Palestine, one on the plain of Capharsaba, which he called Antipatris, after his father; another, near to Jericho, which was named Cypros, after his mother; a third, as you go from Jericho northward, whereby he rendered the neighbouring



country more fruitful with the cultivation introduced, and this he named after his elder brother, Phasael. Then he rebuilt Anthedon, a city which lay on the coast, and had been demolished by the wars, and he called it after his great Roman friend, Agripeum. And at a place eastward from Jerusalem, where, at the time of his flight, he turned about and defeated the pursuing forces of Antigonus, he erected in commemoration of that event the city and fortress of Herodium. He further erected many buildings as presents to neighbouring states—gymnasiums at Tripoli, Damascus, and Ptolemais, a wall for Byblos, a theatre for Sidon, town-halls, markets, and colonnades for Tyre and Berytus. He constructed an aqueduct for the Laodiceans who resided on the sea-coast, and baths, costly fountains, and a large and beautiful peristyle for the people of Ascalon. He gave liberal presents to several cities which he visited both in Syria and Greece; the large open causeway at Antioch of twenty furlongs' length, which had been shunned on account of its miry condition, he paved with white marble, and also built a colonnade of equal extent to serve as a protection from the rain. While on a voyage to Rome he stayed some time with the Eleans at the celebration of their Olympic Games, and seeing how they were come to nothing for the want of funds, and that the only relic of ancient Greece was almost gone, he not only accepted the office of president, but bestowed a sum for their perpetual support. We are told that Cæsar and Agrippa often said, in respect to this unbounded liberality on the part of the king, that the dominions of Herod were too small for the greatness of his soul, and that he deserved to have added to his kingdom both Syria and Egypt.

25. The Jews were offended at every boon which Herod conferred on the neighbouring Gentiles.

They would have been much better satisfied with the splendid Temple which he built in Jerusalem, if he had not cheapened the gift in their estimation, and at the same excited their jealousy, by bestowing like favours on other communities. Thus, he erected a temple in the new city of Sebaste for his Samaritan subjects, which was remarkable both for its beauty and extent. He built also a handsome temple for his Grecian subjects at Cæsarea, another at the sources of the river Jordan, and another for the inhabitants of Rhodes. While clinging steadfastly to his own religion, he not only tolerated but sincerely respected the various forms of worship which obtained with other people, so long as they were seen to be conducive to virtue and the elevation of thought. In this, as in some other respects, he resembled his great predecessor, Solomon, who was also libelled by intolerant ecclesiastics. The prejudiced Jews, under the domination of their priests, could not in the least comprehend such broad sympathies; every religion but their own was in their eyes a heathen abomination, which should be swept from off the face of the earth. They much preferred the kind of piety which was displayed by the Maccabees and their descendants. Those ruthless warrior-priests did not build any Jewish temple either in Palestine or in other countries, but were thought to render a very effectual service to God by destroying many which belonged to the Gentiles. They did their utmost to confer on Jerusalem a spiritual monopoly, and to realise its dream of so crushing all competitors that its one Temple should supply the religious wants of the entire world. Though the second Temple was inferior in point of size and splendour, it seemed to jealous Jews more lordly than its successor, the glory of which was diminished by the shadow of the hated rival fanes erected elsewhere.

26. While constantly endeavouring to promote the welfare of his Jewish subjects, Herod was not indifferent to the interests of their brethren who were dispersed in other countries. During his journey through Asia Minor and Greece, in company with his friend Agrippa, he conferred many favours on the inhabitants of those parts, and especially on the dispersed Jews. "As soon as the affairs of Pontus were settled, which called Agrippa to that province, they did not think fit to return by sea, but passed through Paphlagonia and Cappadocia. They then travelled over Great Phrygia and came to Ephesus, and sailed from Ephesus to Samos. And Herod bestowed various benefits on the cities to which they came, according to their need, for he was liberal both in money and kind acts. He became an intercessor with Agrippa for all such as sought his favour, and he so brought things about that the petitioners obtained their requests. Moreover, Agrippa himself was of a good and generous disposition, and ready to grant what would benefit the petitioners so long as it should not be to others' detriment. And, when he was angry with the people of Ilium, Herod kindly interposed and effected a reconciliation between them. Now, when they had arrived in Ionia, a great multitude of Jews residing in the cities of that country came to them, and declared the grievances they suffered in being forced into the army and compelled to prosecute their suits on holy days, and obliged to surrender as tribute the sacred money which they formerly sent to Jerusalem. When this clamour was made, the king desired Agrippa to give them a formal hearing, while their grievances should be set forth in due order by his minister, Nicolaus of Damascus. This orator, accordingly, pleaded the cause of the Jews in a long speech, and Agrippa said, in reply, that on account of Herod's good-will and friendship

he would grant their requests, which seemed to him also just. He told them that they should have any petition granted, provided that it should not be to the injury of the Roman government. He assured them that whatever privileges had been given them should not be abrogated, and that they might continue in the observance of their own customs without any one causing them annoyance. When he had thus spoken he dismissed the assembly, and Herod stood up and saluted and thanked him for the kind disposition he had shown them. Agrippa also took this in a very obliging manner, and saluted him again, and embraced him. After this, he went away for Lesbos, but the king determined to sail from Samos to his own country. And, when he had taken leave of Agrippa, he pursued his voyage with favourable winds, and landed a few days after at Cæsarea. Thence he went on to Jerusalem, and gathered the citizens together in great number, while many also came up from the country. So he gave them a full account of his prosperous journey, and told them how he had interceded for the Jews of Ionia, and obtained the redress of their grievances. He further assured them, that in the administration of the government he had neglected nothing that would be for their advantage; and, as he was now in a remarkably good humour, he remitted a fourth part of their taxes for the last year. And they were so pleased with his speech, and the favour that he had shown them, that they went their ways with great joy, and wished the king all possible happiness" (Ant., xvi. ii. 2-4).

27. Herod's Jewish subjects suffered occasionally very severe distress from sabbatic famines; that is, from their neglecting every seventh year to cultivate the ground and gather the usual harvest. It has been supposed by many that the impractical piece of priest-legislation which we find at Leviticus xxv. 2



was not in existence, or not observed during the ancient Hebrew monarchy, but was introduced, with other regulations of austere Judaism, after the return of the Captivity. During the Asmonean period, the septennial rest seems to have been rigidly enforced throughout Judea, and if Herod, among his other reforms, had attempted to abolish it with the view to the public welfare, it would, probably, have led to a general revolt. The Levitical promise held out to the people, that their crops should be doubled in every year preceding that appointed for rest, was, like all other such promises, never fulfilled. Yet the superstitious cultivators, under the guidance of their priests, persisted in making the sacrifice, and then very unreasonably required the Government to partake of their loss by favouring them in their year of idleness with a remission of taxes. The thirteenth and fourteenth years of Herod's reign were both years of agricultural neglect, the sabbatic year being followed by a year of jubilee; so that, according to the representations of their priests, they ought to have been furnished beforehand with a triple crop to meet the corresponding deficiency. But, as no such extraordinary harvest was gathered, they were probably told that the divine blessing was withheld or forfeited on account of their sins or ceremonial negligences, and they had, at any rate, in consequence of their misplaced faith, to experience the miseries of a protracted famine.

28. Josephus, in describing the distress which afflicted the country in the thirteenth year of Herod's reign, does not mention its being a sabbatical year, but says "there were droughts, and for that reason the ground was barren and did not bring forth its usual fruits. And, after this barrenness, that change of food which the want of corn occasioned produced distempers, and an epidemic prevailed. So one

misery followed on another, many people died, and those who survived had no courage, because they saw no remedy. When, therefore, the fruits of that year were spoiled, and what they had provided beforehand was spent, misery still increased upon them, and there was no remaining hope of relief. For they had no corn left but the seed which was sown, and that perished also by reason of the ground not yielding its fruits on the second year. The distress also made them eat from necessity many things which they were not accustomed to eat. Nor was the king himself, any more than other men, free from suffering, for he was deprived of his usual tribute, and had expended his stock of money in liberality to the other cities which he had built. Nor had he any people that were worthy of his assistance, for this miserable state of things had procured him the hatred of his subjects, misfortunes being always laid to the account of those who govern" (Ant., xv. ix. 1).

29. Had the people been wiser, they would have laid the account of the calamities they suffered, not to Herod, but to their misguiding priests, who had deranged their agricultural economy and burdened them with unreasonable observances. While they, with their sabbatic superstitions, had brought on the country both famine and pestilence, the king, with timely and generous intervention, did his utmost for the alleviation of those miseries. We are told that he "thought it best under any circumstance not to leave off assisting his people. So he sold off the valuable furniture in his palace both of silver and gold, not even sparing the finest and most costly vessels. Then he sent the money thus procured to Petronius, whom Cæsar had made prefect of Egypt; and, as many had already fled to him in their distress, and he was a particular friend of Herod, and desirous to preserve his sub-

jects, he assisted him in every way both in purchasing corn and exporting it to Judea. And the king, who made it known that this help came from himself, thus not only conciliated those who had hated him, but convinced them of his regard for their welfare. For he regularly distributed rations of corn to the destitute, and employed people to grind and convert it into bread for such as were old and infirm and consequently unable to do this for themselves. He also took care that they should not suffer from the cold of winter, since they were in great want of clothing through the scarcity of sheep and goats. And, when he had procured food and clothing for his own subjects, he went further, and endeavoured to assist his distressed neighbours, giving seed to the Syrians, which seasonable bounty proved to them of very great advantage. Then, as soon as the harvest was approaching, he sent no less than fifty thousand men whom he had sustained into the country, and thus repaired the afflicted condition of his own people and lightened the distress of his neighbours. There was no destitute person to whom he refused succour, and it appeared on a computation that the number of cori of wheat, of ten Attic medimni apiece, that were given to foreigners amounted to ten thousand, and the number given to his own subjects eighty thousand. This seasonable care and benevolence of his had such an influence on the Jews, and was so cried up among other nations, that it wiped off much of that old hatred which he incurred by the violation of Jewish customs. And it looked as if these calamities which afflicted his kingdom came in order to raise him in public estimation and contribute to his advantage. . . . And now, when all Herod's designs had succeeded according to his calculations, he had not the least fear that any troubles would arise in his kingdom, because he kept the people

quiet, not only by rigorously punishing the seditious, but by the provident kindness he had shown in relieving the distressed. But he took care to strengthen and secure his government in every possible way, for the orations which he delivered in various cities were fine and full of kindness. And he cultivated the friendship of their governors, and gave them presents and made them well affected towards him by his generous disposition, and they stood round about him in great strength for his security" (Ant., xv. ix. 2, 5.)

30. When we take into consideration his maintaining the country for such a length of time in peace and security, his suppression of brigandage, his extensive colonising and building operations, his benevolent travels, and his strenuous efforts to save the people from perishing by famine, it may well be asked what other Jewish sovereign ever did a tenth part of the public good that was accomplished by Herod? His government was far superior, and in many respects a perfect contrast, to that of his Asmonean predecessors. The world has long been accustomed to regard the Maccabean princes as a noble race of patriotic heroes; but they were, after all, only so many fighting brahmins, the champions of a barbarous fanaticism, the determined foes of toleration and every Hellenistic and civilising influence. They encouraged the predatory habits of their countrymen, fought in behalf of Jewish exclusiveness, fought to make their poor brethren slaves of the priests, and starving victims of sabbatarian superstition. In short, they brought a plague of madness on the nation, and Herod came if possible to restore the afflicted people to sanity; they spread desolation in every quarter, and he went about and exerted himself with all diligence to repair their breaches



and build up their ruin. Judas Maccabeus and his brothers invaded the neighbouring countries to worry the inhabitants with persecution, to ravage cities, destroy temples, and carry away great quantities of spoil. Both they and their successors thus made their aggressive subjects to be hated and feared all around, and when a harmless Jewish trader happened to wander among Gentiles who had suffered from the attacks of his image-breaking countrymen, they were naturally disposed to visit on him their resentment. Herod, on the other hand, went forth as a messenger of peace and good-will to the surrounding nations. By building temples and other edifices for them, bestowing handsome presents, and distributing relief largely in a season of distress, he did his utmost to wipe out the remembrance of Asmonean ravages and bring the Jewish name into better repute. Many Romans, like Agrippa, were induced to respect the prejudices of the dispersed people, and treat them with more consideration than they had hitherto done, solely through the merits and intercession of the benevolent ruler of their country. In short, by his noble and generous conduct, he produced such a favourable impression on the inhabitants of every Gentile city that it became safe for other Jews to follow him; he was an ambassador pleading and obtaining reconciliation for the whole race.

31. But, do what Herod would for the advancement of their welfare, that portion of the Jews of Palestine who formed the Nationalist party were inexorable, and continued to regard him with unrelenting animosity. They might be checked occasionally by repressive measures, or silenced by some fresh act of liberality on his part, but only for a very short time; every one of his good deeds, which ought to have called forth lasting gratitude, was either speedily forgotten or other-

wise grossly misrepresented. A member of the Irish parliamentary party said of the benevolent secretary, Mr. Forster, whom they called by the opprobrious name of "Buckshot," that, when at the time of the Potato Famine he went to Ireland on a mission of charity, his real object was not to distribute relief, but to see and take pleasure in the people's sufferings. The Jewish Nationalists, with equal spitefulness, refused to admit that Herod was ever actuated by a single good motive. If he conferred any favour on Gentile communities, they contended that it was only because he despised Israel and the law, and turned aside to cultivate a debasing friendship with idolaters. On seeing that he occasionally sent presents to his distinguished Roman friends, they said that he thus corrupted them and purchased their favour with bribes. When he generously remitted a third part of the people's taxes, we are told that it was "under the pretence indeed of relieving them after the famine, but the main reason was to recover their good-will, for they disliked him on account of his innovations and neglect of Jewish customs, and everywhere talked against him" (Ant., xv. x. 4). It was undeniable that he had built the magnificent Temple at Jerusalem; but, so far from thereby intending to benefit the Jews, they believed that his real object was only to find an occasion for destroying their genealogies (Jost., *Gesch. der Juden*, p. 323). He had erected a handsome monument of white marble to David and Solomon on what was believed to be the site of their tombs; and, according to a popular myth, he was not moved to do this by any respect for those monarchs, but simply to propitiate the Divine vengeance which threatened him for having feloniously broken into the royal sepulchres and attempted to carry off their concealed wealth (Ant., xvi. vii. 1). It must be observed that

Josephus not only records this calumnious legend as authentic history, but takes credit for doing so, and contends that Nicolaus of Damascus could have only failed to mention it in his narrative from a manifest disposition to flatter Herod and conceal and extenuate his crimes.

32. Josephus, after recording, as Nicolaus had done before him, the many generous actions of Herod, and rehearsing, on the other hand, the malicious things that were said about him by the Jewish populace, and finding it difficult to reconcile reports so contradictory, shows on his own part a very decided preference for the speakers of evil. At any rate, he seems to think, that on taking all stories into consideration, there is abundant proof of Herod's wickedness, but no proof whatever that he possessed a single redeeming virtue. Like other prejudiced Jews, he is ready enough to admit that the king from time to time did certain things which were good and commendable in themselves, but labours to make out that he was still entitled to no credit, since all his good actions clearly proceeded from bad motives. It seemed evident to him and to his brother Pharisees that no good thing could possibly come out of Idumea; that they ought not to show respect to one who slighted the Levitical law when it suited his purpose, and was the friend and associate of heathen Gentiles. And what if this man had built cities and temples, fed hungry multitudes, mastered the sea, stilled the raging storms of sedition, and performed many other mighty works too difficult for any of his contemporaries, it was evident that he did these things only by the assistance of Beelzebub. The historian delivers his biassed judgment in these words: "Now, there are some who stand amazed at the diversity of Herod's nature and purposes. For, when we con-

sider his munificence and the benefits which he bestowed on mankind, his veriest enemies are compelled to admit that he had a nature that was vastly beneficent. But, when any one looks at the punishments which he inflicted and the injuries which he did, not only to his subjects but to his nearest relatives, and takes notice of his severe and unrelenting disposition, he will be forced to allow that he was brutish and a stranger to all humanity. Some people are, therefore, led to suppose that Herod had a double nature and qualities which were quite in contradiction to each other; but I am of a different opinion, and believe that all his actions proceeded from one and the same spirit. For, being a man ambitious of honour, and quite overcome by that passion, he was induced to be liberal whenever there appeared any prospect of obtaining either present or future renown. Then, as his expenses were beyond his means, he was compelled to be harsh to his subjects; for those on whom he expended his money were so numerous that it made him a bad tax-gatherer. And, knowing that he was hated for the wrongs which he did, he thought it not an easy thing to atone for those wrongs without its hurting his revenue; he therefore strove, on the other side, to make the ill-will of the people an occasion for his gains. If any one was not very obsequious to him in language, or would not submit to be his slave, or seemed to desire a change in the government, he was not able to contain himself, but prosecuted his very kindred and friends, and punished them as if they were his enemies. And he did this wickedness out of a desire that he might be himself alone honoured. Now, for this my assertion about his passion for honour, we have abundant evidence by what he did to honour Cæsar, Agrippa, and his other friends. For the same honour that he be-



stowed on his superiors he desired to be paid to himself, and such excellent presents as he gave he showed also a strong inclination to receive. But the Jews are by their law strangers to all such things, and accustomed to prefer righteousness to glory. For this reason the people were not agreeable to him, as it was out of their power to flatter his ambition with statues, or temples, or any other such performances. And this seems to me to have been at once the occasion of Herod's crimes towards his own subjects, and of the benefits which be conferred on foreigners and others who were in no way related to him" (Ant., xvi. v. 4).

33. Such is the crooked and contradictory judgment passed upon Herod by this representative of the self-righteous sect of Pharisees. Josephus would make it appear that the Jews were grievously overtaxed by their king; but this was notoriously not the case, and they were, of all people in the world, about the least entitled to make any complaint of fiscal oppression. They were entirely released from tribute every seventh year, and even in other years a considerable portion of what was due from them Herod, on more than one occasion, generously remitted. When did they ever experience so much liberality at the hands of any former ruler of Israel? Herod undoubtedly gathered a larger revenue than his predecessors had done, not, however, by squeezing the country more, but by conferring on it the advantages of peace, reviving and protecting agriculture and other industries and thus making it produce more. He was a prince of unbounded liberality, yet not a luxurious spendthrift, and there is no truth whatever in the representation that his expenses exceeded his means, as was the case with another king so much extolled by Josephus—Herod Agrippa. That he was honest as well as generous in conferring benefits we have

abundant proof, and it is one of the most commendable features of his character. When the people were distressed with famine and he was short of funds, he neither robbed, borrowed, nor begged for their relief, as many impecunious princes would have done, but promptly stripped his palace, sold off his costly furniture as speedily as possible, and distributed the proceeds for that purpose. Then, as to his being a man ambitious of honour,—doing this, that, and the other generous thing solely to obtain the world's praise,—have we any reason to suppose that his accusers, who did far less for the advancement of human welfare, were less infected with the love of commendation? The ostentatious benevolence of the Pharisees was far more reprehensible than that of Herod. It is all very well for a private person to give alms secretly, hoping for a reward in heaven, but it is the duty of a king to gain, if possible, the respect and esteem of his subjects, and, consequently, he must not hide from them his good works. One thing is certain, no man distinguished through life for acts of munificence ever obtained less applause from the recipients of his bounty than Herod did, and, if he had been mainly influenced by a craving for honour, he would have abandoned altogether the ungrateful Jews, and sown his benefactions on a more genial soil. The representation that he was a proud, pompous ruler, who desired every one to bow down to him as an obsequious slave, is totally untrue, is the very reverse of truth. Instead of being surrounded by courtiers and state ceremony in the manner of most Oriental princes, he was ever ready to condescend to the level of his subjects, and make himself accessible to the poorest petitioner. Indeed, he much more nearly resembled a Roman president or magistrate than an Asiatic despot; so far from making everybody obsequious to him, he went about from

city to city, humouring the inhabitants with speeches and endeavouring to ascertain all their wants.

34. Nicolaus describes Herod as he actually knew him from long and familiar intercourse; Josephus, while copying this writer's description, will not accept it as a correct one, and proceeds to construct another picture of the king from his own prejudiced imagination. He assures us that Herod was displeased with the Jewish people because they, being "accustomed to prefer righteousness to glory," refused to flatter his ambition. It would be much more correct to say that the Jewish people were, for just such a reason, displeased with Herod. If he had flattered their ambition, as the Maccabees did,—that is, led them forth to ravage the neighbouring Gentile countries and obtain a succession of glorious victories,—they would have honoured him greatly, and given him a place among their other iconoclastic and predatory heroes. But he was determined to restrain their aggressive spirit, and hold the balance fairly between Jew and Gentile; and when they saw that he made no distinction of circumcision from uncircumcision,—when they found that he treated their religious robbers and pious assassins precisely as he would any other evil-doers,—they knew not how to contain their overpowering rage. He respected their prejudices to a reasonable extent; he certainly did not ask them to erect temples and statues to him, nor dream of any such thing, and simply desired them to give up their infernal conspiracies, and behave as peaceable and loyal subjects. Because he did not consent to be led as a sheep to the slaughter, but turned round and struck down some of his remorseless foes with the spirit of a lion, it is made to appear that he slew people to gratify a murderous propensity, when he was all along only lifting up the sword of justice to punish offenders and save the country

from the woes of civil war. The worst thing that can be fairly said of him is, that he punished accused persons in some instances on insufficient evidence and with too much severity; and this was especially the case in his delivering up to judgment and execution the refractory members of his own family. But those Jews who artfully incited some of his relatives against him, and falsely accused others with the view, by every possible means, to cause him trouble and weaken his authority, were really the cruel wretches who ought to be held guilty of their blood. The failings of a man, when placed in such exceedingly difficult and trying circumstances as his, generally receive the most charitable consideration. It is surely more reasonable and just to say that, in spite of his occasional severity when surrounded by treacherous foes and under great provocation, Herod was at the bottom a good-hearted and conscientious ruler, than to say, as Josephus has done, that, notwithstanding the ten thousand benefits which he conferred on the country, "he was brutish and a stranger to all humanity."

35. With the best desire to promote their welfare, the reformation which Herod effected among the Jews was after all less than that of the great Gentile conquerors who accomplished their dispersion in Assyria, Media, Persia, Chaldea, and Egypt. There is no more effective method of enlarging people's minds and liberating them from the dominion of injurious local prejudices than by taking them clean away from their old associations and placing them in new circumstances. When the famous Abdel Kader, believed to be endowed with supernatural powers, was made prisoner by the French and brought away to Europe, his followers were, in consequence of this humiliation, disappointed in him, and he undoubtedly thought less of himself; but he soon became in every respect



a better and more enlightened man. The kindness of intelligent foreigners, whom he had long hated, wrought a beneficial change on his mind, such as would not have been produced by any amount of preaching and persuasion if he had continued a sacred emir in his own country. Those Mahometan saints, the marabouts, who, in various parts of Algeria and Tunisia, occupy their respective holy places, and are filled with conceit by the homage which they receive from superstitious visitors, would be reformed, too, if they could only be transported across the Mediterranean and brought into close relationship with a few sensible Europeans. And it is clear that, if a holy man may be thus led by migration, change of scene, and new surroundings, to abate his pretensions and take a more modest and reasonable view of himself, the same means sufficiently extended will be equally efficacious in lowering the conceits and correcting the eccentricities of a holy nation. At any rate, the removal of the Jews from the sacred soil of Palestine, and their forcible dispersion in Gentile countries, contributed more than anything else to break down their barrier of exclusiveness, moderate their pride and their prejudices, and assimilate them with the rest of mankind. Even at the present day, the Holy Land is observed to have a deteriorating moral influence on those of the inhabitants who most revere it and regard it as their rightful inheritance. Send any European Jew to settle there as a Restorationist, and he is certain to retrograde more or less towards bigotry and barbarism, and, while rising in his own conceit, will fall in the estimation of all reasonable men. On the other hand, take one of the miserable religious beggars, who have long resided there under rabbinical authority, and transplant him to some orderly district of Europe or America, and you will put him in a path of reformation and progress.

36. It is evident that Herod, endeavouring, as king of Judea, to reform the Jews in their own land, was labouring under the greatest possible disadvantages, since they were there, more than anywhere else, proud, fanatical, and obstinately wedded to the past. And he was not sufficiently aware of this, if he even suspected it at all. He seems to have thought that the Jews of Palestine might, under good government, become as orderly and progressive as their dispersed brethren in Egypt, Babylon, and elsewhere. Circumstanced as he was, he could not destroy Jerusalem and effect a new dispersion on a large scale, after the manner of Nebuchadnezzar; but he might with advantage have adopted the policy of Gabinius, and done his utmost to promote within his own dominion Jewish decentralisation. It has been frequently said of him that he was not a good, sincere Jew; but in reality he was too much of a Jew, that is, too strongly imbued with Jewish prejudice. One of the greatest mistakes which he made, after marrying the Princess Mariamne, and forming a polygamous household, was the following so far in the footsteps of his Asmonean predecessors as to make Jerusalem his capital. He thus identified himself, to a great extent, with the wholly mischievous and retrograde movement of the Restorationists, who bestowed on the Holy City an idolatrous homage, till it got to be a thousand times worse than the car of Juggernaut in destructiveness. Do what he would for the honour of Jerusalem, he could not conciliate the fanatical population collected there; it only became the greater stronghold of revolutionary turbulence, and he ought to have treated it as a Mecca, carefully demolished its fortifications, and established a new capital at Sebaste or elsewhere. The palace which he had in the city was surrounded by mischievous

intriguers, and became in consequence a nursery for family feuds; while the vast sum which he expended in building the Temple would have been more wisely laid out in the erection of new and commodious synagogues for the Jewish population scattered in the provincial towns of Palestine.

37. Many a king revelling in wealth and luxury has been known to attract such a number of disorderly people to his capital that it has become at length a kind of political volcano, greatly endangering his throne. Herod, on assuming the government of Judea, found Jerusalem already in this condition; it contained the most violent of the Nationalist party,—fierce, seditious people, who were only to be conciliated by a war of independence, to be followed by Maccabean conquests. As he could not pursue this mad course for their gratification, it was not worth while to humour them at all, and they should have been kept under strict surveillance, and treated as irreconcilable enemies. Instead of embellishing and strengthening the Holy City as another Solomon, it would have been well if he had stood coldly aloof from it, and done all in his power by counter-attractions to diminish its importance. The turbulent and disorderly people collected there might have been left to fight out their own quarrels, for no external danger threatened them, and if they wanted guarding at all on the part of the government it was to prevent them from perpetrating aggression. No other idolatry called forth by the work of men's hands was so hurtful to the Jews as their fanatical worship of Jerusalem. Herod was not sufficiently enlightened to see this, or he would have separated himself from it, and taught the people that all places are alike holy and acceptable to those who humbly seek communion with God. Had he actually taken such a course, and, at the same time, avoided the

Asmonean entanglement ; and, after the example of his honourable father, confined himself strictly to one wife, the composite nation which he ruled would in all probability have had greater permanence, and his reforming efforts more important and enduring results. For the removal of race hatreds and religious strifes, for the reconciliation of Europe and Asia, he laboured in another and better way as perseveringly as Alexander ; and, like that great ruler, left no single, undisputed, and capable successor to maintain the integrity of his dominion and continue his work.

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## CHAPTER IV.

## HIS REFORMED RELIGION.

1. Mosheim's dark portrait of Herod. 3. The charges made against him by Ewald. 7. The Jews an excessively superstitious rather than a pre-eminently religious people. 9. Herod brings the priesthood under state control. 10. Roman justice and Jewish purity. 11. Solomon opposed to the bigotry and exclusiveness of the priests. 12. The religious toleration which both he and Herod established. 14. Pagan and Christian polytheism. 15. Defects of Jewish priest legislation. 16. Jews demoralised by seeking favour and believing themselves a chosen race. 18. Their prophets little better than their priests. 21. Rabbinical slavery and religious freedom. 25. Charges advanced against Herod by Josephus. 27. Herod compared as a reformer with the early Christians. 28. Their belief in Divine partiality. 32. Iconophobia. 35. Vaccination. 38. Diabolism. 40. The Martyr spirit. 42. Anarchism. 46. Christian progress. 47. Herod should be honoured by modern Jews and Christians, but is viewed through mists of prejudice.

**T**O speak of Herod as a ruler having at heart the interests of religion, and being even a promoter of religious reformation, will appear supremely ridiculous to those who have always been accustomed to regard him as a monster of wickedness. Modern ecclesiastical historians who, after the example of Josephus, persist in blackening his character, invariably represent him as a corrupter both of religion and morality. Mosheim says, "This prince was surnamed the Great (surely from no other circumstance than the greatness of his

vices), and his government was a yoke of the most vexatious and oppressive kind. By a cruel, suspicious, and overbearing temper he drew upon himself the aversion of all, not excepting those who lived on his bounty. By a mad luxury and an affectation of magnificence far above his fortune, together with the most profuse and immoderate largesses, he exhausted the treasuries of that miserable nation. Under his administration and by his means, the Roman luxury was received in Palestine accompanied by the worst vices of that licentious people. In a word Judea, governed by Herod, groaned under all that corruption which might be expected from the authority and example of a prince who, though a Jew in outward profession, was a contemner of all laws human and divine" (Ecclesiastical History, chap. ii. sec. 1).

2. There is no warrant in the pages of Josephus for this extravagant caricature of the king, unless it be in the statements made by the vile deputation who went to Rome to calumniate him after his death (War, ii. vi. 2). Herod was credulous and too much inclined to believe evil reports of people, but he had not a cruel and suspicious temper; indeed, he was naturally trustful and unsuspecting when no one attempted to poison his mind. So far from drawing upon himself "the aversion of all," he undoubtedly had a greater number of friends than any other contemporary ruler, with the exception of his patron Augustus. Then as to the charge of his having exhausted the treasuries of Judea, that was really done by the wars of the Asmonean princes, while by his better government the national coffers were replenished. The worst vices known to the Romans existed in Palestine long before Herod's time, and grew there, as in other Asiatic countries, spontaneously. In all

countries which have been afflicted with war, there is pretty sure to follow with the return of peace and material prosperity a certain amount of moral deterioration through the less enlightened among the people falling into extravagance and over-indulgence. So, during the greater part of Herod's reign, the increase of luxury was unavoidable, not only in Palestine, but throughout the Roman empire. But the king himself was certainly not a vicious and licentious man, nor even a voluptuary; the most culpable luxury which he indulged in was probably polygamy, and that only from politic considerations, as in the case of Solomon. He led an active and laborious life, and by way of recreation delighted in hunting, theatricals, and athletic sports; but he never debased himself by indulging in Bacchanalian revels, and, though he loved palatial splendour and costly ornaments, he was not unwilling to sacrifice these when a period of distress came and it was desirable to supply food to his starving people.

3. One of the most acrimonious of Herod's recent assailants is the great German scholar, Heinrich Ewald, who, like Mosheim, holds him up to reproach on the score of irreligion and as a terrible corrupter of the Church of Israel. This sturdy champion of Hanoverian independence and unrelenting foe of Prince Bismarck, naturally sympathises with the Jewish Nationalists in their mad struggle against Roman authority, and regards Herod as a foreign usurper who, had he dared, would have played the ruthless part of Antiochus Epiphanes. "In the case of the Asmoneans," says he, "their origin, in a purely national struggle for the true religion, as well as their priestly descent and their possession of the high-priesthood, led them as strictly as possible to its genuine observance and sanctification,

and, whenever they diverged from this object, every one had a right to sharpen their conscience and recall them to their primitive duty. But Herod had been placed on his throne by the Romans ; he was a layman, and his position in Israel was that of a foreigner who only adhered to the religion of Israel out of prudence so far as appeared absolutely necessary. There still lurked in him a strong element of the coarse tiger nature to which the ancient Idumeans had accustomed themselves, which burst forth with the utmost vehemence as soon as ever the object in view was power and outward honour. He had not the remotest desire himself to be high-priest, and thought he had done quite enough when he filled up the office at his own discretion and made over to his nominee the duty of caring for sacred things. . . . He was fond of the splendour and magnanimity of royalty, nor had he the least hesitation in rendering services also to foreigners and heathens ; nay, he would even display towards them a special munificence and generosity, as though he found a secret pleasure in thereby indemnifying himself for the Judean constraint which he was otherwise obliged to place upon himself ; while, on the other hand, he had a peculiar hatred for the nobly-born of his own people, and continually persecuted them, as, in fact, the circumstances of his position compelled him to do. Such was the attitude in Israel of this despot, a Judean and yet not a Judean, still less an Israelite in the high sense of the word. The real and deeper evils of the time he could not remove, with all his violence and cruelty, for he would not even distinctly recognise them ; and, consequently, when the tranquillity which he enforced came to an end with his death, the final overthrow was all the more speedy and desolating. This was, in fact, only the signal for



the inner defects, inhering in this as in every hagiocracy, to reveal themselves with all the more force. The hagiocracy was not openly and fundamentally contradicted by Herod, although he had at heart no honour for it, and in some cases even transgressed many of its prescriptions. . . .

What was, therefore, only a characteristic possibility in the shape offered by the hagiocracy was hardened in Herod into the most terrible sin; and, if it was the guilt of this particular individual to have given practical shape to this offence, the hagiocracy, by the mere fact of its tolerance of him, and its inability to arouse any fundamental opposition to him, or even in its need of outward tranquillity to dispense with him, revealed its own great weakness and helplessness. Herod was cunning enough to see into its feebleness and secretly laugh at its impotence; he was mean enough to employ them for his own purposes and passions while outwardly willing to attach himself to it; he was even so dastardly and base as to use the money, which he drained like blood from the people he despised and from its hagiocracy, chiefly in procuring honour and glory in the heathen world, which was now, as he well knew, the seat of sovereign power" (History of Israel, vol. v. p. 419).

4. So thoroughly imbued is Ewald with Jewish prejudice that one might almost suppose there had somehow transmigrated into his body the spirit of an ancient rabbi. To the faults of the Asmonean priest-kings he seems utterly blind, more so even than Josephus, who prided himself in being one of their kindred. There is nothing to strike him as wrong in these ritualistic robbers carrying desolation into all the neighbouring Gentile countries, and either circumcising the males or putting them, young and old, to the sword; they were simply

making known the power of the Lord of Hosts among the heathen, and displaying their great zeal for the Law. But, as for their successor, Herod, who thought it well to reverse their aggressive policy, and, as much as possible, make restitution for the wrongs inflicted by giving liberal presents to those whom they despoiled, he has hardly words sufficient to express the contempt which he feels for that ruler's baseness and cowardice. Of course, he entertains the belief of Josephus, that all the king's good acts were done with a bad motive; but, even supposing Herod had always in view the advancement of his honour and glory, it was far better to do this by benevolence to foreigners than by capturing their cities and bringing home spoils. The Asmoneans, for whom Ewald has such strong sympathy, were undoubtedly constrained by their birth and by their sacred office to respect the Jewish religion so far as ceremonies and outward observances went. If they had been known to eat a small portion of prohibited food, or had made a slight mistake in respect to the Passover, or the new moons, or the offering of sacrifices, there would have been much commotion about it, and the people would have sharpened their rabbinical conscience and obliged them in future to act with more scrupulousness. But so long as they showed due respect to the outward forms of religion, or rather to the superstitious customs which had grown up in connexion with religion, they might freely disregard its moral spirit. They were not required to judge righteously between Jew and Gentile, and lead a pure and honourable life; they fought one against another and even committed murder for the possession of the high-priesthood, while their marauding armies went beyond the borders and carried everywhere injustice and cruelty. The

high-priest, Alexandra Janneus, was told on one occasion by the people of Jerusalem that he was unfitted for his sacred office; not, however, through his being addicted to drunkenness and debauchery, not from his having ravaged many towns and committed unheard-of atrocities; the blemish which they ascribed to him was wholly of a physical character, like the cropped ears which at a later period disqualified his son; it was generally believed that he had descended from a captive woman, and was, therefore, not sufficiently honourable in point of blood!

5. It cannot well be disputed that Herod, by bringing to a close the hereditary high-priesthood and the frightful evils that accompanied that system, effected a great religious reform. Ewald says, in his disparagement, that "he thought he had done enough when he filled up the office at his own discretion." At any rate, he placed in it well-qualified and honourable men, who only held it so long as they continued of good behaviour: it was not under him fought for by rival candidates with savage ferocity, nor occupied by drunkards and murderers. If Herod was "a layman, and his position in Israel that of a foreigner," it would be easy to cast the same reproach on the good Samaritan of the parable, who still, however, discharged his duty to his fellow-men far better than the Levite and the priest. But, notwithstanding his Idumean descent, his father and grandfather were Jews before him,—religious and patriotic Jews,—and he was less of a foreigner in Judea, his native country, than the late Lord Beaconsfield was a foreigner in England. "Whatever his origin," says Dr. Edersheim, a modern Israelite, "he was a true king of the Jews, as great—nay, greater than Solomon himself. Certainly neither labour nor

money had been spared on the Temple. A thousand vehicles carried up the stone; ten thousand workmen, under the guidance of a thousand priests, wrought all the costly material gathered into that house, of which Jewish tradition could say, 'He has never known what beauty is who has not seen the Temple of Herod.'" "In building the Temple he was so anxious to conciliate national prejudice that the sanctuary itself was intrusted to the workmanship of priests only. Nor did he ever intrude into the Holy Place, nor interfere with any functions of the priesthood. None of his coins bear devices which could have shocked popular feelings, nor did any of the buildings he erected in Jerusalem exhibit any forbidden emblems" (Jesus the Messiah, vol. i. pp. 120, 128).

6. Crafty, ambitious, and unscrupulous men have sometimes conformed outwardly to a national religion in order to gain an office or a throne, and Ewald tries to make out that Herod's profession of Judaism was of this sort—a mere cloak of hypocritical pretension—but there is not a particle of evidence to support such a charge, when we consider his birth, breeding, and consistent religious behaviour through life. If he "only adhered to the religion of Israel out of prudence, so far as appeared absolutely necessary," why did he devote such a large portion of his revenue to the building of the Temple, for which there was no popular demand? Though he erred occasionally, he was neither a profane scoffer nor a hypocrite; his whole line of conduct was that of an honest, straightforward, religious prince, disregarding public opinion in many things, and only respecting what his judgment and conscience forced him to respect. He not only rebuilt the Temple and improved the high-priesthood, but reconstituted the Sanhedrin,



under the presidency of the great reformer, Hillel, who taught the Jews to distinguish the moral kernel of the Law from its outer husk of forms and observances. To judge from his own sensible conduct on many occasions, he entirely agreed with this teaching, and even went in the practical disregard of ritual somewhat further than Hillel would have dared. Consequently, he gave offence to the more rigid school of Pharisees, and was regarded by them as an innovator and contemner of Judaism. If he could not remove the prevailing bigotry, race hatred, and other "deeper evils of the time," he at least tried to remedy them, and it is certainly no discredit to him that the tranquillity which he enforced came to an end at his death; it simply proves his great ability and shows that he had no worthy successor. As to his favouring foreigners and having a peculiar hatred of the nobly-born of his own country, it is simply one more repetition of a calumny which Jewish prejudice and jealousy originated; he punished many people, both Jews and Gentiles, rightly or wrongly, but only because they were accused and believed to be guilty; and he persecuted no man or woman in all his dominions; as far as possible, he put an end to persecution. Curiously enough, Ewald is a great admirer of King Solomon, yet for Herod, who pursued the same enlightened and liberal policy, he has nothing but scorn and reprobation.

7. No writer can do justice to Herod so long as he persists in regarding the Jews as a holy and peculiar people—a race specially chosen of God for the illumination and guidance of the rest of mankind. They were never entitled to this high distinction on any more satisfactory evidence offered to the world than that of their own arrogant pretensions. If they had rally been superior to

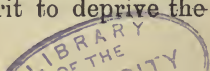
all other communities in the practice of religion and virtue, they would have been distinguished by a modest, unostentatious manner, and would not have asserted their pre-eminent virtue themselves, as is customary with dervishes and marabouts. Instead of assuming a garb of holiness, maintaining peculiar customs, and taking up an exclusive position in the world, they would have been more industrious than their neighbours, more honest, more orderly, more peaceable, more tolerant, more generous—in short, patterns of virtue and rectitude which all nations would have been willing to imitate and compelled to respect. A people with the moral and religious superiority which is claimed for the Israelites, and appointed to teach others, should have been not only the most powerful nation in the world, but the most highly cultivated; they ought certainly to have been foremost in acquiring all kinds of useful knowledge, and disseminating it for the benefit of other races. A recent writer, in treating of their especial religious excellence, thus explains the parts which are assigned to different races in the education of mankind:—"To one from whose eyes the scales have fallen, the newer criticism, with the general conception of Israel's history to which it has given rise, possesses a fascination similiar to that which was once exercised by the older views. It brings the history of Israel into intelligible and organic connexion with the whole life of man upon earth—that is to say, with the divine purpose as manifested in human history. As we find in Greece the nearest approach to the normal development and training of the æsthetic nature, as we find in Rome the nearest approach to the normal development and training of the practical, social, and political nature, so we find in Israel the nearest approach of the normal develop-

ment and training of the religious nature of man" (Modern Review, vol. ii. p. 555).

8. This notion of the Jews being more advanced than all other races in religious culture has arisen, naturally enough, from the circumstance of our Bible being, by the fortune of proselytism and war, exclusively Jewish, instead of containing, as it might have done, if compiled by a more catholic Church, the flower of what was written by all the virtuous and wise. There were inspired prophets and teachers—good, earnest, devout, self-denying men—among Gentile communities, as well as among the Asiatic race, who practised circumcision and claimed to be descended from Abraham. The Jews were, on the whole, an excessively superstitious and priest-ridden people—a people obstinately attached to their peculiar customs, priding themselves in a superior ancestry, and foolishly prejudiced against the rest of mankind. Had they been truly and pre-eminently religious, they would have been more just, more humble-minded, more charitable towards their Gentile neighbours; they would have freely acknowledged the strong points of other people and admitted their own deficiencies. They would, in fact, have expressly declared that, while it was their special calling to diffuse a purer religion among men, the Romans had a mission to establish law and order upon earth and bind the nations together in unity, and the Greeks were intellectually endowed to enlighten and refine more barbarous communities by the instrumentality of science and art. But so far from understanding their position, as a religiously enlightened people would have done, and being prepared to labour harmoniously with others in a great divine scheme for the education of mankind, they did all in their power to

oppose and obstruct the beneficial work of those who in some ways of furthering human progress were more highly gifted than themselves. They were wholly unable with their inefficient police to maintain order and tranquillity in Palestine, and instead of giving a hearty welcome to the legions of Cæsar, as their aids in pacifying the country, they fought against the Roman forces more recklessly and obstinately than any other race in the world. And, while backward in the study of nature and the cultivation of art, they were so little disposed to acknowledge the superiority of the Greeks in these ennobling pursuits, that they looked on the beautiful productions of Phidias and other sculptors with the greatest abhorrence, and regarded the instructive works of Aristotle, Euclid, and others as heathen abominations which ought to be cast into the fire.

9. If among the proud, circumcised population of ancient Palestine there was one Jew free from Jewish conceit, it was certainly the much-abused reformer, Herod, the man who ruled the country. He did more than any other ruler or teacher to induce his co-religionists to abate their high pretensions, and show a proper respect and consideration for the neighbouring Gentiles. It was not by him that Greek learning and art were despised, and Roman civilisation and order obstructed, yet, because he rose superior to the prejudices of his people, and wisely endeavoured to reconcile the East with the West, a number of European scholars, who ought to do him honour, now hold him up to reprobation and infamy. "The gravity of his guilt," says Ewald, "was that he chose to govern by the aid of all the contradictions and perversions into which the hagiocracy was sinking deeper and deeper." It might be said, with far more truth, that it was his distinguishing merit to deprive the





hagiocracy of political authority and confine the Sanhedrin, which he reformed, to the consideration of ecclesiastical and semi-ecclesiastical causes. In all the most flourishing states of ancient and modern times, magisterial supremacy has been steadily maintained; that is, the magistrate has been placed above the priest, the ecclesiastical power has been subordinated to the civil power, and, where the opposite arrangement exists, religious toleration, and, consequently, religious progress are rendered impossible. Enlightened modern Jews, now resident among us, often declare that, in the interests of toleration, all churches should be equally free, or equally under state control; and they must surely admit that the same regulation was advantageous, in the time of Herod, with respect to the Samaritans and other nonconformist bodies of Palestine. The members of our German and Portuguese synagogues would not like to be called on to rest on Ascension Day, keep the Lenten fast strictly, and have their children baptized; neither was it more agreeable for Gentiles, under the Asmonean priest-kings, to have forced upon them all the disciplinary requirements of Judaism. They were glad to see toleration established by Herod, so that they could appeal against all such ecclesiastical tyranny to the protection of the magistrate.

10. The great moral principle which the Roman magistracy were ever insisting upon was Justice; it was their constant business to curb the selfishness of people, restrain their aggressive propensities, and induce them, while seeking their private interests, to live peaceably and take into consideration the well-being of others. They knew that every one thoroughly imbued with this principle would be a good citizen; would not assault his neighbour, nor rob him, nor calumniate him, nor deceive him,

nor try to seduce his daughter, nor steal away the affections of his wife. On the other hand, the Jewish priesthood, when they undertook the business of legislation and civil government, for which they were wholly unfitted, made the principle of Justice entirely subordinate to that of Purity, and, in insisting that the people should maintain themselves at any cost free from defilement, led them on to the perpetration of enormous wrong. When communities arrive at that stage of civilisation in which it is felt desirable to defer marriage beyond the age of puberty, young persons, unless they receive a wholesome moral training, begin to addict themselves to various sexual irregularities, from which they are not afterwards easily reclaimed. The Jewish priests, instead of exhorting the heads of families to look well after their children, and teach them to refrain from such pernicious indulgences, treated the abuses in their magisterial capacity as horrible crimes, and attempted to suppress them by capital punishment. They did not reclaim vicious people by their barbarous enactments, but only intimidated them and drove them to gratify their depraved lusts with more caution and secrecy. What was far worse, they thus afforded evil-disposed persons a ready excuse for murdering any neighbour with whom they might happen to be at variance, or for hunting him to death by calumny. It was easy to charge a man unjustly with committing some act of defilement, and proceed to kill him on the spot; or, if he happened to be obnoxious to the priests, accuse him formally before them, and so get him sentenced to death. And the same plea, as well as that of possessing images and eating forbidden food, served at length to justify the spoliation and massacre of whole communities.

11. In every age, Gentile rulers have looked on

the intermarriage and mixing of races as a great aid to peace, as a golden link for bringing into close union distinct peoples who have long been accustomed to regard each other with hostility. The enlightened king, Solomon, married more than one foreign princess while endeavouring, in various other ways, to cultivate friendly relations between his Jewish subjects and the neighbouring Gentiles. But it was in this step towards breaking down old prejudices, and promoting the better union of mankind, that he gave especial offence to the Jewish priesthood, who desired to cherish race hatreds, and keep up their ancestral peculiarities. The king might indulge in excess of wine, and wade so deep in polygamous sensuality as to marry a thousand Jewish wives, without calling forth a word of remonstrance, for he would still be considered a pure Israelite, but in yoking himself to a single foreign princess he became in sacerdotal eyes fearfully debased and corrupted. Under Solomon, some approach was made to the Roman system of magisterial supremacy and religious toleration, and, as a consequence, the various tribes composing the nation were held together in peace. The Jewish priesthood, in taking up a regal position, completely reversed this liberal policy, and rendered the federal union of peoples on a large scale impossible. All who hoped to have friendly relations with them were required to adopt their peculiarities, and thus mankind were to be worried in every direction with vexatious intolerance, and propagandist wars were to rage and desolate the face of the earth.

12. Solomon and Herod have both been held up to reproach for tolerating, and even cultivating, polytheism within their dominions, while professing

themselves to be monotheists. But polytheism is a necessary stage in the religious education of mankind, and the example of those rulers is justly imitated by every enlightened government in this century. So long as the human race are in a rude, primitive condition, divided into barbarian communities or small independent states, constantly at war with one another, each distinct tribe will be generally found to worship its one tribal god, and to acknowledge no other divinity. But it invariably happens, after much struggling for the mastery, that a number of petty tribes or states become banded by conquest into a strong nation, under a common ruler and a common system of laws. Then other changes, to correspond with their political growth and unification, are called for, yet cannot be so readily and speedily effected. It is desirable that the people who have a common government should also have a common language and a common monotheistic religion; but until local prejudice and local habit can be sufficiently overcome for the attainment of this further union, polytheism and polyglottism must be tolerated. The Roman empire was a mighty confederation of divers races and tribes, and, so long as it continued to flourish, those provincial populations were becoming more and more united by a common culture, and were steadily advancing from polytheism to monotheism. A similar work of educating and harmonising discordant communities went on in the less extensive empire of King Solomon. The Ammonites, Moabites, and other conquered peoples were permitted to retain their various forms of tribal worship, and, if his dominion had endured and his example of inter-marriage had been followed, the whole tribal prejudices would, after awhile, have quite disappeared, and there would have been a united monotheistic



nation. But the narrow-minded Jewish priests refused to recognise polytheism as a necessary stage of advance from very low to loftier religious ideals; they would admit nothing as true but their primitive tribal worship, and if every other people had been as intolerant and exclusive as the Jews, a widely-diffused monotheism would have been unattainable.

13. In the dominion of Solomon there were probably some bigoted Moabites, who refused to acknowledge any god but their own Chemosh, regarding all the other tribal gods of Palestine as so many devils or evil spirits. But in the minds of their more thoughtful brethren, the toleration and generosity displayed by Solomon in erecting a place of worship for them near Jerusalem would be likely to call forth a similar feeling, and they would begin to think that Yahveh of the Israelites, whom they had hitherto regarded as a devil, was, after all, a benevolent god. Then, as Israelites, Moabites, and Ammonites became more united and friendly, they would join in each other's worship as polytheists, and gradually reach the grand and sublime conceptions of monotheism. Some such religious progress as this was undoubtedly made by the primitive Israelites; but it was arrested by the intolerant priests of Jerusalem, when they denounced every attempt to personify the Deity but their own as an idolatry and a heathen abomination. Far in advance of those priests was the enlightened Plutarch, who wrote thus: "As sun and moon, sky, earth, and sea are common to all, while they have different names among different nations, so likewise, though there is but one system of the world which is supreme, and one governing providence, whose ministering powers are set over all men, yet the laws of different nations have given to them different names and

modes of worship ; and though the holy symbols severally employed by these are not all equally obscure, yet all alike fail of being perfectly safe guides for the contemplation of the Divine. As Zeus is the beginning and centre of all—everything has sprung from Zeus—man's first duty is to correct and improve his ideas of the gods if anything impure or wrong has found its way into them. But if this is beyond his power, he should leave every one to follow that opinion which he has received from the laws and religious traditions of his country. The divine religion is imperishable, but its forms are subject to decay " (Neander's Church History, vol i. p. 49).

14. Dean Milman, in describing the growth and development of religion in the Pagan world, says : " While every nation, every tribe, every province, every town, every village had its peculiar local or tutelar deity, there was a kind of common neutral ground on which they all met, a notion that the gods, in their collective capacity, exercised a general controlling providence over the affairs of men, interfered especially on great occasions ; and, though this belief was still more vague and more inextricably involved in fable, administered retribution in another state of being. And thus even the common language of the most polytheistic nations approached to monotheism." He further shows that Christianity, after having carried on a tremendous war throughout the Roman empire for the suppression of Paganism, became polytheistic itself of necessity in taking the place of that system in the hearts of the people. " Men passed from rational respect for the remains of the dead, the communion of holy thought and emotion which might connect the departed saint with his brethren in the flesh, to the superstitious veneration of relics and the deification of mortal men by so easy a transition, that they never dis-

covered the precise point at which they transgressed the unmarked and unwatched boundary. . . . The worshipper acknowledged his dependency, and looked for protection or support to these new intermediate beings, the intercessors with the great Intercessor. They were arrayed by the general belief in some of the attributes of the Deity—ubiquity, and the perpetual cognisance of the affairs of earth; they could hear the prayer, they could read the heart, they could control nature; they had a power derivative, indeed, from a higher source, but still exercised according to their volition over all the events of the world. Thus each city, and almost each individual, began to have a tutelar saint; the presence of some beatified being hovered over and hallowed particular spots; and thus the strong influence of local and particular worships combined again with that great universal faith of which the Supreme Father was the sole object, and the Universe the temple" (History of Christianity, vol. i. p. 14; iii. p. 419).

15. We frequently hear it said, at the present day, that the whole system of Jewish sacerdotal legislation was instituted by God with the special design of educating the people and preparing them for a higher religious development. But it could not possibly be so, because the priests introduced unwise regulations of various kinds which must have been injurious; and, while ascribing their laws to Moses, they really corrupted the primitive religion of Israel. It has already been shown (chap. I.) that without a king and in the absence of magistrates they were wholly unfitted for the business of civil government, and their rule was the reverse of beneficial. They could only maintain their position by flattering the people, pandering to their race prejudice, and dangling before them bright illusory promises of future glory, which did not by any

means conduce to their moral elevation, nor contribute to their permanent well-being. The Jews, on the strength of the priest legends imposed upon them, came to consider themselves a holy and peculiar people set apart in honour from the rest of mankind, and they looked with contempt on all neighbouring communities. With so much self-conceit and pride of ancestry instilled into them, and encumbered with peculiar observances, and trained to habits of harsh exclusiveness, lest they should suffer from defilement, it was quite impossible that they should get on agreeably with other nations, or even have peace among themselves. Solomon encouraged his subjects to have friendly intercourse with the neighbouring world, and they were consequently blessed with prosperity; the priests taught their people to shun Gentiles as poison, and they were hated accordingly and trampled down and scattered abroad.

16. The Jews cared not for justice, and were constantly craving and expecting favour, yet the experienced and wise know well that favour or undue preference is not simply a doubtful advantage to mankind, but a positive curse. Let the father of a family show a marked consideration for one son—yield to his selfish entreaties, lighten his labours, overlook his transgressions, invariably side with him in all the disputes which he has with his brethren—and how will such treatment affect his character and future welfare? It cannot fail to make him a proud, idle, conceited, quarrelsome youth, whom everybody will regard with aversion, and instead of eventually prospering and becoming the foremost member of his family, he will in all probability end his days as a criminal or a vagabond. Let a provincial or national ruler treat in like manner a certain portion of the subject community, that is, make them a privileged class, confer on



them honours and prerogatives which they have not fairly earned, permit them to break the laws with impunity—and it will be found that they do not become any wiser, and better, and happier for such treatment, but just the reverse. The indulgences received will intoxicate them with pride and arrogance, and they will act in such a presumptuous manner, and make so many enemies, that continual troubles must result, and a disastrous termination of their career will at length be inevitable. A corrupt priesthood got the Jews to believe that they were so favoured above other people by the Lord of heaven and earth, and this illusion had just the same demoralizing effect upon them as though they had really been singled out for Divine partiality. Feeling assured that they were the chosen race set apart in holiness from the rest of mankind, they were continually looking for supernatural help in their quarrels, and rushing into battle with full reliance on angelic auxiliaries. They expected such interventions in their behalf as they were led to believe had been vouchsafed to their ancestors in past times; and instead of living circumspectly, and learning to treat others as they wished themselves to be treated, they were always presuming on a fancied superiority, and contending with such rashness against stronger forces, that they were at length more crushed and humiliated than any other conquered community.

17. The Jews were taught by their priests and rabbins to pray, not for spiritual gifts—industry, patience, perseverance and the like—but for external fortune; they continually begged favours, supernatural bounties, and thus became like the generality of beggars, completely demoralized; they expected to reap where they had not sown, and suffered the pains and sorrows of visionary idleness. They sometimes asked on the warrant of priest legends

that a river or a sea might be divided before them, and throwing themselves with false trust into the waters, were soon driven back in disappointment or drowned (Ant. xx. v. 1; Milman, *Hist. Jews*, vol. iii. p. 175). Whatever may be said of Herod, he did not deceive the people like Theudas, Moses of Crete, and many others. When it was desirable that some great natural obstacle should be removed for their advantage, he taught them to earn it as a reward of patient industry, and not expect to get it by enchantments. Conducting a host of labourers across the plain of Sharon to a point of the coast where a maritime port was much needed, he did not entreat God to favour them with a sea-breaking miracle that they might stand and look on in idle wonderment, but bade them put forth all their industry and skill in diving, digging, hauling, and building, and after many days they beheld their recompense in the magnificent harbour of Cæsarea. Neither did he encourage the people to look for miraculous assistance in war, nor even to expect Divine spiritual aid unless they were contending in a right cause. During the war with the Arabians, he addressed his dispirited soldiers to this effect: "Fear not the numbers of the enemy who break covenants and murder ambassadors, for God is with those who act justly, and where He is there will be courage and multitude" (Ant. xv. v. 3.)

18. We often hear it said at the present day that, as compared with the Jewish priests, the prophets were reformers; but they were not less prejudiced or less pretentious teachers, and only had the advantage of speaking from a more independent position. A prophet, in the best sense of the term, is a wise, far-seeing man, one who clearly perceives the evil tendencies of the time, and warns people accordingly to effect a speedy reformation if they would escape disastrous consequences. Every good

father is a prophet to his children ; he foreshows the temptations which will beset them when they go forth into the world, and admonishes them to renounce their vicious habits, which will otherwise involve them in great trouble and perhaps lead to their ruin. He does not, however, profess to tell of any good or bad fortune that awaits them otherwise than as the fruit of their own actions ; fortune-telling they will get from a tramping soothsayer, and, so far as credited, it will contribute to their moral injury. The greater portion of those who contemplate the future of nations, and are given to political vaticination, stand on no higher level and see no farther ahead than the rest of mankind. For the last hundred years and more, Polish prophets have been continually predicting the restoration of Poland, Irish prophets the independence of Ireland, and American prophets the downfall of monarchical governments throughout the world. Their forecasts have, so far, entirely failed and caused some disappointment, but they have still accorded with popular wishes, and if they had been more prescient and truthful they would have obtained less credit. The Jewish prophets of the post-exilic period were representative predictors of a similar character ; they saw with the people, and not beyond the people ; they won a high repute by giving expression to the wishes and aspirations of their time, but those ardent national longings were not realised.

19. Some of the prophets occasionally denounced injustice, and gave good admonition ; one or two of them being in advance of the priests in respect to sacrifices (Isaiah i. 11 ; Micah, vi. 6). In general, however, they mixed up special religious customs with universal moral duties, and considered the former no less obligatory than the latter, so that their ethical teaching could not be very effective. Dishonest dealers would be less likely to put away

their “wicked balances” and “bag of deceitful weights” when asked to do so, if told at the same time that they must not have an ornamental image in the house nor carry any burden on the sabbath. Though the land of Israel was over-run with robbers, in the estimation of the prophets the crying iniquity of their time was not stealing but statutory. They failed also to point out the various natural penalties which accompany departures from rectitude, and, instead of doing so, threatened people with judgments which were purely imaginary. Storms, blights and locusts occasionally fell on Palestine and other Eastern countries, or they suffered from an epidemic, no matter what might be the character of the inhabitants. When marauding bands were collected, or conquering hosts were on the march, a nation was also liable to be invaded without reason, and suffer from the calamity of war. These adversities, which entitled people on whom they fell to commiseration, were in an ignorant age too often regarded as scourges decreed by Heaven for iniquity. Herod was more enlightened; when a famine of great severity afflicted Judea he hastened with liberality to relieve the suffering inhabitants, though he had been much troubled by their turbulence, even to occasional attempts on his life. Fancy an Isaiah or a Jeremiah in the same royal position; how he would have raved at the supposed judgment that had befallen his enemies, and heaped denunciations of woe on their heads!

20. The Jewish prophets were truly of the *genus irritabile vatum*—warm, impulsive, passionate men, greatly wanting in reasonableness and amiability, and the fierce vindictive spirit which they felt towards all who had displeased them, they imputed to God. Not content with witnessing calamities occasionally, they took great delight in predicting them as though they had been specially



commissioned for that purpose. Egypt was to be brought low; Babylon and Tyre were to be destroyed; Assyria was to be laid waste; Idumea soaked in blood, and Damascus made a ruinous heap (Isaiah xiii.-xxxiv.) This prospective humiliation of all the Gentile communities gratified the prejudiced Jews, but did not render them more neighbourly or contribute to their enlightenment. They would have gone forth eagerly and reduced Damascus and other cities to ruin in accordance with what the prophets had said, if they had only possessed the military power to accomplish such purpose. Predictions of evil against persons and parties viewed with disfavour have often prompted the ill-disposed to effect their fulfilment. Houses have occasionally been burnt down and rulers assassinated, only because those crimes were suggested by prophecy and regarded as the judgments of Heaven. The Gentile cities, if not assailed in consequence of Jewish predictions, would still be likely to suffer some harm, for people might be deterred from going to live in such doomed places, or frightened away from them, lest they should be involved in their impending ruin. Not content with famines, plagues, earthquakes and falling cities, the prophets went at length so far in catastrophic vaticination as to foretell the destruction of the world (Isaiah xxxiv. 4), and thereby caused a deplorable amount of panic and confusion. It was not possible for any band of incendiaries to set fire to the mountains, but thousands of credulous people were so convinced of the approaching wreck of all material things, that in anticipation of the end, they deserted their homes, ceased to labour and provide for their future wants, and were consequently reduced to extreme poverty.

21. Herod has often been held up to opprobrium

as a dragoon of the Roman Imperial Government, holding his Jewish subjects in an iron bondage. In reality, he gave them more national independence than any other man could have done at that period, and so far from oppressing them, was rather a liberator who endeavoured to free them from the yoke of their own superstition. No Gentile community were ever so entangled, hampered, and restricted on all sides as they were in a net of encompassing ritualism. Dean Milman, writing of the growth of rabbinical power and influence under the hagiarchy of the Second Temple, says: "By degrees, the whole life of the Jew was voluntarily enslaved to more than Brahminical or monkish minuteness of observance. Every day and every hour of the day, and every act of every hour had its appointed regulations grounded on distorted texts of Scripture, or on the sentences of the wise men, and artfully moulded up with the national reminiscences of the past, or the distinctive hopes of the future . . . . His rising from his bed, his manner of putting on the different articles of dress, the disposition of his fringes, his phylacteries on his head and arms, his ablutions, his meals, even the calls of nature, were subjected to scrupulous rules both reminding him that he was of a peculiar race, and perpetually reducing him to ask the advice of the learned men who alone could set at rest the trembling and scrupulous conscience" (History of the Jews, vol. iii., p. 67.)

22. Unless religious people, when acting conscientiously and wishing to do what is right, are free to reason from hour to hour, and choose the best of two or more possible courses, according to the indication of circumstances, it is obvious that they can never be either truly virtuous or truly wise. The slave, who goes through a daily routine of labour, and blindly obeys some master from fear of

his wrath, is in no better position for the exercise of his reflective powers and the cultivation of high moral character than the yoked ox or the driven mule. He does this or that thing simply because he is told to do it, and not from any sense of its being just, honest, reasonable and conducive to human welfare. He will perpetrate a crime without any hesitation if so directed, and will not step aside from the task which he is set to do, even to save a fellow-creature's life. This was very much the condition of the superstitious Jews under the restrictions of rabbinism; they had hardly any free, spontaneous action; they wanted others to think for them as occasion arose, and seemed to dread the responsibility of thinking and deciding for themselves. A strict observer of the priest-law would sooner be burnt to death with all his household than do the amount of work which was necessary to extinguish a fire on the sabbath. During the Maccabean wars the Jews were frequently assailed on their prescribed day of rest, and many were slain easily just because it was known that they then refused to take up arms and defend themselves. No more effective system than that of rabbinism could well have been devised for rigorously confining men to a fixed course and keeping their reasoning powers feeble and undeveloped for want of exercise. The game of chess would be a very unprofitable diversion for a player who should simply move as he was told to move, or where the players should agree to go through a set game with all the moves pre-arranged and foreshown. It was the disposition of the rabbins to order and determine in just such a fashion the whole economy of human life, and reduce people to the condition of unreasoning puppets.

23. It must be observed that the Jews were under a kind of double bondage; they were not

only fettered by the Law, but were restricted to a certain line of action by the Prophets. Solomon in his day was free to look round and do what he considered best for the nation; he could shape his policy according to the turn of circumstances. But the Judeans of the Second Temple, instead of studying wisely their political situation and making the best of it, as any people under the guidance of magistrates and statesmen would have done, believed that they had no choice in the matter, since the particular course which they were to take had been marked out for them by prediction. They set about to fulfil the Restoration prophecies, heedless of obstacles that stood in their path, and however inadequate their powers, and by obstinately persisting in this design were utterly ruined as a nation, and scattered over the world. Even many individual Jews imagined that their destiny was prophetically revealed in Scripture, so that instead of acting freely and wisely they fell under a kind of fatalism. They took up the part which seemed to be intended for them very much as an actor follows Shakespeare on the stage, and adhered to it in every particular with dramatic obsequiousness. They did such and such things not spontaneously, not from a present conviction that it was the best course for them to take under existing circumstances, but from a belief that they were in this way faithfully fulfilling prophecy, or doing what was required of them by predestination.

24. While the Jews were thus in some form or other rigidly fettered by priest-writings, Herod went about, as Solomon had done before him, discharging his duty in every direction with perfect religious freedom. He did not consult diviners and soothsayers, nor ask what had been prophetically written about him, neither did he call on the learned men to interpret correctly the law in every case of



difficulty. Keeping clear of their miserable sophistries, he looked about on the circumstances of the time and the evils then prevalent, and did what his judgment and conscience dictated as being most conducive to the national welfare. We know that he erred occasionally, as all men are liable to err, from ignorance, but he was ever advancing and getting enlightenment, and he stood before his Jewish subjects as a conspicuous example of rational conduct which generally merited imitation. If they had learned to respect him, and act as he did, showing themselves more solicitous to maintain order throughout the country than to conform to an insensate ritual, they would at least have escaped a terrible succession of troubles and preserved their national independence. Josephus advances the following charges against the king :—

25. “Herod revolted from the laws of his country and corrupted their ancient constitution by the introduction of foreign practices, so that we became guilty of great wickedness afterwards, while those religious observances that used to lead the multitude to piety were now neglected. He appointed solemn games to be celebrated every fifth year in honour of Cæsar, and built a theatre at Jerusalem and a very large amphitheatre in the plain. Both these works were costly but opposite to the Jewish customs, for we have had no such shows delivered down to us to observe, yet did he celebrate them every five years in a most magnificent manner” (Ant., xv. viii. 1). “As king Herod was very zealous in the administration of his government and desirous to stop the acts of injustice done by criminals about the city and country, he made a law of his own, unlike our original laws, for the banishment of housebreakers. This punishment was grievous to be borne by the offenders, and it was contrary to our old customs. To send men out of the country to serve foreigners

who did not live after the Jewish manner was an offence against our religious settlement rather than a proper punishment of crimes. In our original laws it is ordained that the thief shall restore four-fold, and that if he have not so much he shall be sold indeed, but not to foreigners, and shall be released after six years. But this new law which inflicted a severe and illegal punishment was a piece of insolence in Herod. He did not act as a king but as a tyrant in thus contemptuously disregarding his subjects and venturing to introduce such a punishment. It was like his other actions, and it became a standing charge against him and the occasion of his incurring so much popular hatred" (Ant., xvi. i. 1.)

26. No other people but the prejudiced Judeans would have hated Herod for those acts of his which were intended to promote the general welfare. Theatricals and military sports, though something of a novelty to them, were not forbidden by their law, and modern Jews of the strictest type are exceedingly fond of attending such diversions. If Palestine had contained only Jews, it would certainly have been impolitic at that time to introduce these foreign customs; but the greater portion of the inhabitants were Gentiles who delighted in such exhibitions, and why should they not enjoy other pleasures than those prescribed by rabbinism? The throwing of condemned criminals to wild beasts, or setting them to fight as gladiators in a circus was certainly a cruel practice, but it was less barbarous than the Jewish custom of stoning them to death. Moreover, Herod's main object in presenting grand spectacles to the people was good; it afforded them enlivenment; and it was the only means available for bringing his Jewish and Gentile subjects together in a pleasant mood and promoting friendly relations between them. There was also very good reason

for his banishment of housebreakers which Josephus so strongly condemns as an innovation. Jewish robbers were so well banded together that it was scarcely possible to punish them effectively by penal servitude in their own country. If a man was sentenced to forced labour he had to be allowed a great deal of freedom, and even treated as a brother, or his comrades would soon effect his release (Ant., xx. ix. 3, &c.). Seeing that robbers were not deterred from crime by being kept in mild servitude at home, Herod rightly resolved to dispose of them as slaves in other countries, where they would be held fast and dealt with more rigorously. In the wars of an earlier period large numbers of Jews had been carried away into slavery, and it was maintained by Josephus, and other Maccabeans, that their captivity was well deserved because some of them had bowed before images ! Now, when Herod banished only criminals, they were greatly incensed at his tyranny, deeming it a monstrous thing to send away good sons of Abraham to herd with the uncircumcised heathen for the petty offence of house-breaking !

27. When an enlightened prince in ancient times wished to reform the laws of his country it was generally possible for him to do so without much trouble or delay. He published the new regulations which were to come in force at a certain date, and the old ones were at the same time superseded and rendered obsolete. Herod would have liked to act in the same way, but he was in a position of peculiar difficulty ; the new legislation which he introduced as a change for the better could not be established effectively because the old still remained as an obstruction. The priests had not only devised bad laws, but had rendered them worse than ordinary bad laws by ascribing to them a divine origin and thus insuring their permanency. It was Herod's

mission to correct as far as possible the Maccabean intolerance, which had brought Jews into fierce conflict with Gentiles, and made the whole of Palestine a field of blood. He desired to end the terrible strife and enable the various races that inhabited the country to live together in future on terms of amity. All his measures were directed towards this beneficent purpose, but after his death they soon ceased to have any force, while the sacred priest-laws and legends remained to testify against him and uphold Jewish privileges. Therefore, when the early Christians presently appeared on the scene, they could not well catch the spirit of his reforming work, and fell of necessity under the older Maccabean influences. It is true that in many respects they were religiously superior to him, but it will be easy to show that on some points he stood in advance of them, and was more effectively emancipated from the prejudices and superstitions embodied in the dominant Pharisaism.

28.(I. *Divine Partiality*). The belief that God favoured them as a people, was a fundamental principle of the Jews' religion; the priests had instilled into their minds that they were a chosen race, set apart in holy distinction, and entitled to many privileges which could not be enjoyed by the rest of mankind. Herod, on the other hand, was firmly assured that the world was overruled by Divine justice; that the nations and tribes scattered in every direction were members of one family and treated by the Eternal equitably. He acted himself in accordance with this conviction, looking straight at the conduct of men, and showing no preference for any on account of their country or birth: circumcised and uncircumcised, Jews, Greeks, Samaritans, and Syrians were employed indifferently in his service, and he only desired that they should honestly discharge their duties and prove worthy of trust. The circumstance



of his being an Idumean, and under a reproach on that account, was of course a great help towards his emancipation from race prejudice; it would have been hardly possible for a ruler of Judean birth to manifest such liberality. The early Christians profited in like manner from being reared out of the immediate reach of Jerusalem, among the hills of Galilee, where the people were more than half Gentiles. They were doubtless on friendly terms with some of their Gentile neighbours, and might have associated with them religiously, only that the Jewish Scriptures, which they held in reverence, sternly pronounced against such a fellowship. No ill-feeling was manifested towards other races, but in view of what the prophets had said, and the promises that were made to Abraham, only circumcised Jews were considered eligible as members of the primitive Galilean brotherhood. They received also with implicit faith the prophets, "Daniel" and "Enoch," who made it clear by their visions that at the end of the world only saints of Israel would be admitted to the kingdom of heaven.

29. The apostle Paul, from living as a Hellenized Jew in Cilicia, acquired broader views, and became more emancipated from Judean prejudice than the Galileans. It is not surprising, therefore, that after joining their communion, he should engage with great zeal in enlarging the circle of believers by Gentile proselytism. He met with good religious people of various races, and thus became convinced that there was "no respect of persons with God" (Rom. ii. 11), "no difference between the Jew and the Greek" (x. 12). It was a very creditable advance for a born Pharisee to make, and had he been ignorant of the Jewish Scriptures, this doctrine of Divine justice might have been consistently maintained to good purpose. But the story of the Call of Abraham, and other priest legends, compelled

him to admit that God really had respect of persons, and ruled in a general way by partiality. He imagined that there must still be a chosen people on earth, but not as hitherto confined to one race, since the Gentiles had become qualified for election. Instead of calling some individual and conferring on him a favour which descended to his posterity, God was supposed by Paul to make a succession of calls among the children of men, and bestow spiritual privileges which were not hereditary. If the apostle had declared that merit would henceforth be recognised throughout the world, irrespective of birth, and that only the deserving would obtain election, a very great advance would have been made on the Jewish teaching. But he makes it appear that the calling of individuals to everlasting honour is entirely a favour, even as the preference which Jacob obtained over Esau was a favour, and proceeds to vigorously defend such partiality (Rom. ix. 10-24).

30. The story of the circumstances which made Paul himself a chosen vessel furnishes a very clear proof that under the new dispensation which he preached it was not merit that entitled a person to election. We are told that the Pharisees were a sect of obstinate unbelievers, strongly opposed to the teaching of Christ, who, because of their hardness of heart said, "no sign shall be given them." Paul, who belonged to their communion, was not less stubborn and intractable than the rest, but on the contrary the very worst of all in his bitter and unrelenting hostility. He did not simply reject the Christian message of salvation which had been delivered, but went about with fierce intolerance, persecuting believers in every direction, and making havoc of the Church (Acts viii. 3). Being however, one of the elect, marked out and predestined for everlasting honour, such conduct was

excused in his case, and very strong exceptional measures were had recourse to for his conversion. As ordinary signs and wonders had quite failed to convince him of his error, and he gave no heed to the testimony of believers, we are told that there came at length a shock of heavenly light which struck him blind to the earth, and that he was dragged into the Christian fold by main force. All the Pharisees must certainly have been converted if met in the same way, and subjected to the same irresistible pressure, but this would not have been in accordance with election ; it would have looked very much like even-handed justice, and Paul believed that he was commissioned to preach to mankind the doctrine of Divine partiality.

31. Even if the apostle had read nothing about the Call of Abraham, the miraculous vision presented to him on the road to Damascus—or what he supposed to be such—would have been quite sufficient to convince him that God was a respecter of persons. The Jews, however, were not better in character, but rather worse, for believing that they were a people favoured by God above other communities and selected as the special revealers of his will. So neither would an individual Jew be likely to benefit in a moral sense from being under the notion that he was singled out from all the rest of his countrymen for the honour of direct intercourse with Heaven. One filled with such a conceit of high distinction could not well fail to be arrogant and dictatorial ; he would be disinclined to take counsel with his fellows on any public question, rather disposed to slight them and act on his own individual impulse. The apostle was a good, ardent, religious man in spite of his visions, but it would have been better for him to have had no visions, and to have taught that all people receive from God inward light and guidance if they pray for it and

seek it with earnestness. Moreover, however sincere and conscientious the reporter of a vision may be, he will have very great difficulty in getting reflecting people to believe that in what he heard and saw there was no possibility of illusion. Paul himself could not be got to believe in the visions of Stephen and other Christians; so neither would the manifestation which he reported obtain wide and general credit among the Jews. His testimony would stagger people and set them at variance, just as the announcement of an apparition of the Virgin at the present day invariably produces a division in the Roman Catholic community. Some readily believe what they are told of the external favour conferred on one or two persons in a remote district. Others are inclined to think that a real message from Heaven would be delivered to the heads of the Church, or delivered in an unmistakable way to the whole people.

32. (II. *Iconophobia*.) We are not well informed as to what led the party of Jews who returned from Chaldean exile to entertain such an unreasonable repugnance to images. Among Gentile communities they saw other things than carved figures occasionally adored, such as pillars, trees, animals, and the stars of heaven, but were not led in consequence to regard those objects with dislike. It was not indeed considered a religious offence to worship a man, or fall down and kiss his shadow, but those who paid such homage to a man's representative statue were deemed guilty of idolatry. And when images were not worshipped, but simply used for commemorative or decorative purposes as in Solomon's temple, they were no less in the eyes of the Restoration community a wicked abomination. Hence Ezra—or whoever wrote the Second Commandment, supposed to have been delivered long before to Moses—absolutely prohibited the making



of any likeness or representation whether of persons or things. No priest-law devised in an age of superstition was ever more antagonistic to human culture, since it not only struck at statuary and painting, but equally condemned picture-writing, the first stage of literature. It also proved the great incentive to the fanatical wars of the Maccabees, who believed that people possessing images were guilty of enormous wickedness and ought to be punished with death. When the Jews eventually came under the Roman dominion, the prohibition of images caused great trouble as the emblematic eagles borne by the legions were supposed to communicate an idolatrous defilement. So long as they were dominated by this insane prejudice derived from sacerdotal legislation, it was dangerous for any Gentiles to live near them, since they were always suspecting the presence of forbidden things, and seeking for evidence of guilt in order to punish severely what they considered the breach of a Divine commandment.

33. Herod made very commendable efforts to deliver the Jews from this image superstition, which greatly incapacitated them for art culture, and set them at variance with the rest of mankind. It was not in his power to repeal the Second Commandment, because he had to work with the Sanhedrin, which would not have been got to sanction such a measure, but he set a good example, by continually breaking it, and demonstrating its unreasonableness. Jewish prejudice was so far respected, that no likeness was stamped on his coins, but he erected many commemorative statues, and endeavoured to convince them in various ways that it was lawful to make use of emblematic, or ornamental figures, as was done by king Solomon. On the other hand, the early Christians imbibed the iconophobia of the Maccabees, although with-

out the same disposition to clear the land from images by fanatical violence. They were desirous of effecting reforms, as well as Herod, but did not go so far as he, in repudiating the false ecclesiastical standards of righteousness imposed on the community. To have dealt with the errors of Judaism in a comprehensive manner, it would have been necessary for them to have some knowledge of the construction of the Hebrew canon which there was then no means of acquiring. They imagined that the priest-laws were really derived from Moses, to whom they were dictated by God, and therefore did not presume to treat them as human ordinances, although they slighted some by laxity in their observance. Had they the knowledge which the modern Church possesses, they would doubtless have set about to establish a New Law, superseding that of the priests, and would have begun by reforming the Decalogue. They would have written commandments, we will suppose, to this effect: "I. Be faithful to God. II. Know that God is greater than temples and images. III. Know that God is not bound to words and names. IV. Do needful work on the Sabbath."—All that they ventured upon in the way of reform, however, was to express the conviction that the commandments of the Second Table were most essential for Christian observance. (Matt. xix. 18, 19; Rom. xiii. 9). Those of the First Table were slighted, yet permitted to hold their ground, so that now we have unfortunately blazoned up in all our churches the unreformed Jewish Decalogue. The First Commandment gives expression to the old Judean belief in the existence of "other gods"; the Second is a prohibition of the fine arts, the Third embodies the superstition of the sacred Ineffable Name, and the fourth enforces the perpetual obligation of rabbinical sabbatarianism.

34. As Christians were not taught at the outset that the prohibition of pictures and images had for them become obsolete, they continued to regard the Second Commandment as a Divine law that must be strictly obeyed; and its influence on them was such that when once they acquired political and military power, they revived the old fanaticism of the Maccabees, and made incessant war on Pagan communities to suppress their forms of worship, which always had artistic accessories. During the long struggle for religious supremacy, they destroyed many temples and innumerable fine sculptures throughout the Roman empire, under the conviction that they were thus doing a duty which God required of them, and purging the world from idolatry. Even when the Church became in awhile reconciled to statuary and disposed to adopt it for decorative purposes, there were conscientious persons who vigorously protested against this concession to Art as a distinct breach of the Decalogue. It was protesting Christians of this stamp who went over in great numbers to the standard of Mohammed, and contributed greatly to the rapid extension of his Maccabean doctrine in Africa and Asia. Some of the Eastern bishops took great alarm at the progress which was made by the Arabian prophet, for it seemed to them that he had really been raised up by God to punish them for the sin of idolatry. A strong iconoclastic movement arose; during the eighth century, the Greek Emperor Leo published an edict for demolishing all images in churches, and it was carried out with rigour, but not so as to produce general satisfaction and peace. In the following century, Theophilus banished all painters and sculptors from the Eastern empire, being fully convinced that they exercised an unlawful profession. After much bitter dissension among the Greek bishops as to what constituted

idolatry, the opposing parties effected such a compromise that they agreed for the future to admit paintings into churches and rigorously exclude images. During the great Reformation struggle of Latin Christendom, the Puritans in many districts were much more intent on breaking down and disfiguring images than in persuading people to lead reformed lives. And when 'Tae Ping Wang was converted to Christianity some fifty years ago, his followers, on being carefully instructed in the Decalogue, went about assailing Buddhist temples in every direction, having such great regard for the Second Commandment, that to enforce its observance they repeatedly broke the Sixth and the Eighth.

35. (III. *Vaticination*.)—A belief in the supernatural foreknowledge of events, as revealed occasionally by prophecy, implies a belief in predestination; it assumes that everything which takes place on earth has been pre-ordained by God, so that men are only actors in a drama, compelled, everyone to go through an assigned part. It is obvious that this fatalism is not calculated to improve human conduct; it can hardly fail to check noble aspirations, and paralyse to some extent virtuous efforts. So long as a man considers himself free to move in any direction, he may be expected to reason well on his prospects, and take at length that course which shall seem the best. Even if he so makes a wrong calculation, he will be likely to profit by the teaching of experience, and not repeat the error in future. It is altogether different, however, with one who believes that he has no option before him in the business of life, and is bound to do every day what has been sternly decreed. Should any prophet reveal the supposed destiny which has been marked out for him, it will put him in a condition of absolute helplessness to do anything better than obsequiously fulfil the



prediction. Communities, as well as individuals, have suffered much from fortune-telling, especially the Jews, because it has biassed them to act in a certain way regardless of circumstances, and rendered them incapable of taking all things properly into account and making a wise decision.

36. Josephus, who was a great believer in vaticination, assures us that a certain Essene prophet told Herod in early life that he would come to be king of the Jews (*Ant.* xv. x. 5.). Such stories obtained ready credit in Judea, as well as in other countries: when the unexpected happened, and much astonishment was consequently manifested, somebody was sure to invent a prediction of it. But the Jewish prophets never foretold the unexpected; they would just as little have dreamt of a young Idumean sitting on the throne of David, as they would have entertained the idea of an Arabian temple being in future years built on Mount Zion. Nor would Herod have been in the slightest degree influenced by such revealers of fortune. His brother's wife, a weak foolish woman, was misled by them (*Ant.* xvii. iv. 1), but he knew that the Nationalist prophets were opposed to his claims, and he had the best possible reason for discrediting their pretensions. The wise Jesus Ben Sira, author of "*Ecclesiasticus*," had long before warned his countrymen against the folly of continually prying into the future, "Whoso regardeth dreams is like one that catcheth at a shadow and followeth after the wind. . . . Divinations and soothsayings and dreams are vain. . . . dreams have deceived many, and they have failed who put their trust in them" (*xxxiv.* 2. 5. 7). The counsel which this good man gave the Jews was very superior to anything that they heard from their prophets and priests, but it produced very little impression upon them in that age of visionary excitement. Herod

was one of the few thoughtful persons who well laid to heart the warning against vain attempts to read the hidden future, and it was greatly owing to this sound discretion that he stood firmly in the midst of popular commotion and achieved as a ruler such eminent success.

37. The early Christians were perhaps unacquainted with the wise counsels of Ben Sira concerning revelations of the future ; for, while they sincerely desired to do what was right and just, they were more than any other Jews the victims of vaticination. If there had been in their time no visions of things to come, they would doubtless have gone about their work in an exemplary manner and discharged their duty in every direction as good religious citizens. But the Book of Daniel, the Book of Enoch, the Sibylline Oracles, and other forged Apocalyptic predictions, completely turned their heads, and threw them into a condition of moral bewilderment. Believing that a speedy wind-up of all mundane affairs was impending, they did nothing to extend industry, promote trade, repress disorder, or effect any distinct national improvement ; and longed for the time to come when they might soar aloft on angel wings, and behold the whole abandoned world beneath them a blazing ruin.

It may be allowed that their illusions had a certain value in the education of mankind, they were an immense spiritualising force helping to lift people out of baser illusions ; but they were still in many ways positively injurious. For more than a thousand years the anticipation of Doomsday kept people in a condition of dreadful suspense, and frequently hindered and delayed works of permanent improvement. Much harm was also done by other catastrophic predictions hurled against cities, and especially those directed against Rome. One of the Christian sybils says, "O haughty Rome! the

just chastisement of Heaven shall come down upon thee from on high, thou shalt stoop thy neck and be levelled with the earth, and fire shall consume thee to thy very foundations, and thy wealth shall perish; wolves and foxes shall dwell among thy ruins, and thou shalt be desolate as if thou hadst never been." Such prophets made it clear that they wished for Rome's destruction, and, when a fire broke out during Nero's reign and consumed a large portion of the city, it is not surprising that Christians, on the strength of their forecasts, were suspected of being incendiaries. They had hitherto been tolerated, and now began to suffer from persecution, but no assault was made on the Jews because they had become sufficiently discreet to discontinue the objectionable practice of calling down judgments on the great Gentile habitations in which they found shelter and sustenance.

38. (IV. *Diabolism.*) Herod, like Solomon, firmly believed in God, but entertained no devil superstitions. The notion of Satan and his host of evil spirits wandering about the world as opposers of God, and seducers of men, was a corruption of the religion of Israel derived from Persia. The wise teacher, Ben Sira, did not recognise it as a true doctrine in the excellent instruction which he gave his countrymen two hundred years before the Christian era. But the more ignorant and imaginative of the Jewish population were naturally disposed to accept it, and it obtained general credit among the Pharisees. Hence the early Christians became infected with it as they might catch an epidemic, and it had a prejudicial influence on their naturally benevolent disposition. Could they have been taken to some country where the superstition was unknown, the love of God and the love of their neighbour would have quite filled their hearts, and moved them to a generous behaviour towards all. They would

have done their best to remove misunderstandings, heal dissensions, and promote everywhere peace, harmony, and goodwill between the various groups of mankind. Under the bias of Diabolism their love was soon turned into sectarian hatred, they got to entertain the idea that people who differed from them were not simply men of another school, or mistaken brethren to be reasoned with patiently, but agents of the Evil One seeking to ensnare them, with whom there could be no reconciliation or terms of peace. Even the members of a family, who ought more than all others to have stood together constantly in the bonds of affection, got to hate and condemn one another and part asunder in hostility on account of little divergent opinions. The Satan superstition contributed more than anything else to harden and exaggerate human differences; it led to the assortment of mankind, not into associated moral grades, all moving educationally in one direction, but into two discordant groups—the perfectly good entitled to the joys of paradise, and the entirely bad doomed to everlasting perdition.

39. We often hear it said of a good Christian man at the present day, that he has not a single enemy, and it is very natural that such should be the case if he holds no high public position. Why should a man have enemies when he is leading a pure life, manifesting an amiable disposition, and continually caring for the welfare of others? People may not entirely approve of his plans or agree with his opinions, but seeing his goodwill towards them, they cannot regard him with any other than a kindly spirit. The early Christians, however, thought that the higher moral excellence a person exhibited the more certain was he to excite enmity and encounter hostility. For in their opinion, Satan, the arch-enemy of mankind, was sure to make such a pattern of righteousness the special object of his assaults,



and would seek to destroy him, or do all that was possible to corrupt him and counterwork his efforts. And Satan, roaming about the world with his legions of subject spirits, could easily take possession of a certain number of people and make them willing tools to carry out his nefarious designs. Consequently, hostility from such agents was anticipated, and Christians were led to form a very bad opinion of any men or women outside their circle with whom they were not directly associated. Among the ancient Israelites, the worst characters were supposed to do wrong only from interested motives; but when Diabolism became prevalent, people were believed to be capable of preternatural wickedness, that is, of perpetrating crimes from which they could derive no advantage. And in accusations of witchcraft and other devilish plots, which were easily made against persons and parties disliked, the religious world was discredited, and there was witnessed from time to time a frightful amount of injustice.

40. (v. *The Martyr Spirit*.) A belief in the general judgment of departed spirits, and their promotion or degradation as their conduct merited, got to be established at a very early period among the Egyptians; it was afterwards received by the Greeks and others, and got to be accepted at length by most Jews. If it had some evil consequences, it produced on the whole good moral results, and was generally approved of by enlightened teachers as well as magistrates. The chief argument advanced for the probability of this final adjudication of the deeds of mankind was the frequent failure of both good and bad people to receive under the present conditions of life their just deserts. And the belief in a Divine tribunal having a complete knowledge of all that transpired on earth, undoubtedly helped to make up for the shortcomings that were

perceptible in all mundane administration of justice. Young people, who witnessed the impressive Greek mysteries, reflected that though they might commit a crime without their guilt being discovered by the magistrates, there was no escaping the pains of Tartarus, which awaited evil-doers hereafter, and in the hour of temptation they restrained their inclinations accordingly. It was imagined, however, by some teachers both Jew and Gentile, that at the great final judgment, the present good and bad *conditions* of people would be mostly taken into consideration with the view to all receiving in the end their just deserts. They looked for a complete reversal of human fortunes hereafter—the raising of the humble and the lowering of the haughty—as the means of correcting existing inequalities, and producing everlasting equitableness. This doctrine was naturally very consoling to all who were enduring affliction or having a poor and miserable existence, and it did not stimulate them to make any efforts to escape from their troubles. It had, indeed, the contrary effect; if the prosperous man was doomed to suffer hereafter, and only the poor and wretched could hope to gain admission to paradise, people began to think it a great folly to go on toiling from day to day to better their condition. It seemed preferable in such case to cease altogether from working and storing provisions and just live from hand to mouth like the hungry and half-naked mendicants. Moreover, ill-treatment was not to be avoided, but rather courted and welcomed, as it would give a sure claim to everlasting compensation. It was considered advantageous for saints to be suspected of evil designs, to be falsely accused, and even condemned to death, while making no attempt whatever to clear themselves, in order that the judicial wrong so endured might be gloriously righted at the coming day of final decision.

41. Herod, being a prosperous man, was not in the slightest degree infected with the martyr spirit, which had taken much hold of the Jewish community. The Essenes, who constituted a religious brotherhood in his time, were greatly moved by it, and he seems to have entertained a respect for them very similar to that which Cromwell had for the Quakers. They refused to take the oath of allegiance to him, and, knowing that they had conscientious scruples against swearing, and would sooner die than do what they considered wrong, he gave them a special release from the obligation. (Ant. xv. x. 4). The early Christians were a fraternity closely related to the Essenes, looking with like earnestness for the predicted Kingdom of Heaven, and animated by a similar enthusiasm for attaining the glory of martyrdom. Under the stimulus of this feeling they were too much disposed to yield to aggression; they offered no resistance to any who assailed them, and would stand by and see their friends maltreated and slain without so much as lifting a finger in their defence. They thought only of the indemnity to which they would be entitled hereafter for wrong suffering; the perpetrators of injustice seemed to be working for their advantage, and they did not concern themselves with the magisterial duty of maintaining the public peace. Herod was brought up in a different school; he was trained in early life to act as a good, faithful soldier, and feel that he was under an obligation to slay the enemy rather than allow himself to be slain. It was his constant endeavour to deter bad people from committing crimes and enable honest citizens to labour and go about their business without molestation. When he had done his duty as a young commander in suppressing the Galilean robbers, and was thereupon summoned before the Sanhedrin on an unjust charge of

murder, he brought a deterrent body of armed men with him, and thus not only saved his own life, but saved the prejudiced elders from bloodguiltiness. (Ant. xiv. ix. 4.) They subsequently made war against him in support of the Asmonean cause, and, had they been successful, would certainly have condemned him to death, but they found that they had got their master to deal with—a true king of the Jews—who presently turned round in the strength of victory and passed condemnation on them. (Ant. xv. i. 1.) When God had thus given him power to save himself and punish his enemies, it would have been altogether wrong to yield as a martyr to their machinations and afford a temporary triumph to their flagrant abuse of judicial authority.

42. (vi. *Anarchism*.) Herod had one great advantage over the early Christians in being a ruler well acquainted with the business of government, which they, without any experience of the same kind, could hardly be expected to understand. However defective the Jewish laws, the Sanhedrin which opposed him was a well constituted senate, capable, with natural progress, of introducing from time to time improved legislation. Modern Jewish reformers, longing to be emancipated from the thralldom of rabbinism, are constantly advocating the revival of the Sanhedrin as the only means of giving new life to their community, and rendering progression without disunion possible. Herod, doubtless, took the same view of the institution, for while he condemned to death the members who had fought against him, he spared Pollio and Sameas, who were not involved in the general guilt, and with their aid reconstructed the council, and gave it a fresh start in accord with his government. The mere fact that the reformer Hillel soon became president of this new Sanhedrin is a sufficient proof that, under Herod's *régime*, it was amended in



character. As in dealing with the Temple, it was his aim not to destroy but to improve ; when he boldly set about to remove what was defective, he took care to put something better in its place. And if the peace which he gave the country had been permanently maintained, and his wise administration continued for a hundred years after his death, there would doubtless have been witnessed at the end of that period a very considerable religious reformation.

43. If the early Christians had had Herod's experience, or such knowledge of government as is possessed by modern church councils, they would have earnestly sought to obtain seats in the Sanhedrin ; as people wishing to exert political influence in this country now seek to get into Parliament, so that they may speak from a vantage ground. The Jews' religious senate represented fairly the different parties and sects ; it was open to all men of worth whose amount of learning qualified them for election, and Hillel, who became its honoured president, was in early life only a poor woodcutter. The Christians themselves, however, were both narrow and visionary, and not at all disposed to work in concert with men who refused to believe in the impending destruction of the world. So far from taking a single step towards raising the character of the Sanhedrin and increasing its usefulness, they did all in their power to cover it with opprobrium, weaken its authority, and render it worse than useless. Wherever their terrible charges against it obtained credit, its influence for good would be utterly destroyed, while it would still be in a position to perpetrate much evil. If it had become unjust in its decisions, and there was no possibility of effecting its reformation, it should certainly have been dissolved, and a worthier body of men given the succession. But no cry was raised

for this purpose; no effort was made to deliver the nation from the terrible curse of a band of criminal rulers deliberately carrying on a war against righteousness. Nor did Christians, while allowing the Sanhedrin to persist in its iniquity, exert themselves at all to establish pure tribunals elsewhere, and thus improve the administration of justice. Indeed, they thought that magisterial courts were not wanted; they considered it positively advantageous to submit to violence, and believed that all aggressive acts were required to stand over for the great final judgment of Heaven.

44. If Christians did not choose to act as magistrates in place of the corrupt Sanhedrin, they might have done good work as a legislative council by reforming the priest-code so far as its ordinances affected their own community. There was nothing to prevent them from meeting together and drawing a clear line of distinction between universal moral duties which are always binding, and special religious customs which may be neglected if found inconvenient. They were free to declare in the most categorical manner that the circumcision rite and the dietary laws, which priests had introduced in time past, were no longer obligatory to members of the Church. But they were apparently unequal to this: there was much vacillation and indecision among them on the subject; some thought the customs of little importance, and others feared to give them up lest they should so be held guilty of breaking the commandments. The Apostolic council which assembled in Jerusalem were not at all clear in dealing with religious essentials; they decided that Gentile converts need not observe the dietary laws any further than by abstaining from "meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled" (Acts xv. 29). But as those converts became more numerous so as to have a

powerful democratic voice in the Church, they determined in spite of this authoritative judgment not to observe the laws at all. What the Apostles did afterwards in the way of legislation we are not told; they probably did very little, and their decisions commanded little respect. Instead of remaining permanently at Jerusalem as a governing council of the growing Church, tradition affirms that they wandered far apart, and the expanding community of believers, for want of good authoritative guidance, fell more and more into confusion.

45. Jesus taught his disciples that the sabbath was to be kept with rational freedom, so that people might enjoy their needed rest, yet work occasionally if some special circumstance made it desirable. He gave not the slightest hint that the appointed period of rest should be transferred from the end of the week to the beginning. It would have been well if the Church had followed his rule, directing people to keep the sabbath with quiet freedom and not engage in dissipation and revelry. Paul, however, took a different course; instead of admonishing Christians to keep the sabbath wisely, he told them that they need not keep it at all (Rom. xiv. 5; Gal. iv. 10; Col. ii. 16). Many acting on his counsel gave up sabbath-keeping entirely as an obsolete custom. Others rested not on the seventh, but on the first, or Lord's day as it was called, to commemorate the Resurrection. Great irregularity thus arose in the community, and there were four sabbatic divisions—those resting on the seventh day, those resting on the first day, those resting on both these days, and those resting on one day, or the other occasionally. The Emperor Constantine, or rather the bishops who conferred together under his direction, thought it well at length to establish a uniform observance, but instead of reappointing the seventh day as the proper sabbath, they unwisely gave pre-

ference to the first. The only reason that could be assigned for this innovation was the desire of prejudiced worshippers to avoid synchronizing with the weekly rest of the Jews. Christians have not benefited at all by thus framing a new religious time-table, but they have had the poor satisfaction of inflicting the greatest possible inconvenience on the dispersed Jewish community.

46. After having now pointed out some prominent defects of the Primitive Church, we shall be better able to measure the marvellous progress that has since been made by Christianity. Almost every modern Christian, even if blinded occasionally by prejudice, will be found to believe in a just God; the doctrine of *divine partiality* which Paul inculcated is only held in these days by a few extreme Calvinists. Though the Second Commandment is still mechanically repeated in our schools and churches, the terrible *iconophobia* which it incited in past times has now become quite unintelligible. The practice of *vaticination* is everywhere falling into disrepute; if some eccentric preacher occasionally attempts political fortune-telling with the help of the Apocalypse, it is only from the very ignorant and credulous that he will command any attention. For the last three hundred years, the belief in *diabolism* has been steadily declining with increased intelligence and clearer moral perceptions, and will scarcely be met with now excepting in rude uncultured districts. The *martyr-spirit* has become even more rare; there are hardly any persecution-seekers in these days, modern church assemblies have no members longing to die by violence for the sake of compensation in paradise. It was quite natural that the primitive communistic saints should fall into a condition of *anarchism* and become a mere imitative convention, and wisdom and truth in such case will not always go with the majority. Our modern churches suffer



to a certain extent from errors thus blindly established; but they now well understand government and good organization, are striving for great reforms, and manifesting a spirit both truthful and wise. While we have reason to be thankful for our immense religious progress beyond the old confines of Judaism, it will be right to bear in mind that the calumniated Herod was on all these points as far advanced as ourselves two thousand years ago! And what a succession of wars, persecutions, insurrections, and burning barbarities the world would have escaped, if the Jews, whom he governed, had well understood him and followed his guidance, instead of obstructing his measures and heaping on his memory defamation and lies!

47. It will be easy to show that Herod, who differed so widely from his prejudiced and bigoted Judean subjects, and gave so much offence by his innovations, held in nearly every respect identical views with those of modern Jewish reformers. They, like him, are free from iconophobia, they see no harm in erecting statues and emblematic images, and are also very fond of athletic sports, theatricals, and other Gentile diversions. Several Jews of our time have contributed liberally towards the building of churches, although the worship conducted in such places is not in their eyes wholly free from idolatry; and Herod displayed precisely the same generous and tolerant spirit in erecting temples for the Samaritans and the Greeks. The intelligent and loyal Israelites settled in this country are never heard to boast of their lineage; they assert no superiority over their Gentile neighbours, nor pretend to be the sole custodians of religious truth. All forms of worship are viewed by them with kindly respect, for even those which are most debased with superstition they believe to be of real service to rude, uncultured minds, and to contain

the seeds of a higher development. If Herod could have had such liberal Jews for his subjects, instead of the intractable fanatics and cut-throats that gave him so much trouble, he would have been the happiest ruler in the world. Men of superior mind who are so unfortunate as to be misunderstood and hated by their prejudiced contemporaries, generally come to have their merits well recognised by a more enlightened posterity, and justice should ere now have been done to the memory of the second Solomon by these modern Israelites. But, though reformers, they somehow still fail to perceive in him a kindred spirit; they behold him indistinctly through orthodox records obscured and overshadowed by many centuries of myth, and imagine, as past generations have done, that he was nothing but a terrible Gentile oppressor. On the other hand, with just as little discernment, they speak of the Maccabees as heroes, yet had they lived under the rule of those fierce, intolerant, priest-warriors, they would have been hunted out of Palestine in common with all the other Hellenizing Jews who then inhabited the country, or remorselessly put to the sword.

48. Christians are as much dominated by prejudice as Jews when they fail to recognise in Herod an ancient progressive leader of men, free from the worst errors of his age, and in harmony with the culture and religious development of our own times. Many saints who lived at a remote period are now highly honoured throughout Christendom; the calendar commemorates them; churches are named after them; they are spoken of with reverence and continually pointed to as everlasting patterns of righteousness. But if some of those holy men were to appear among us incognito, and go through their miserable round of prayer, fasting, and penance again under our immediate

observation, their austerities would be witnessed with general displeasure and elicit no admiration at all. Our decent church congregations would no more be attracted to them as kindred spirits, or desire a close religious communion with them, than they would feel disposed to form such a fraternal relationship with self-torturing dervishes. But Herod, who is such a monster in the popular imagination, might come amongst us in a new guise and instantly obtain recognition as a congenial personality. Finding no treacherous assassins lurking about, nor any bands of robbers to contend with, he would lay aside his armour good-humouredly, and be sure to devote himself unremittingly to peaceful pursuits. He would erect churches and chapels where they seemed to be needed, and do his utmost to assuage religious animosity, and promote a spirit of goodwill among the various bodies of worshippers. Other constructive works conducive to the public welfare would be undertaken by him, and multitudes of poor people would thus be furnished with constant employment. In the event of a failure of crops, or some other calamity producing great distress throughout the country, he would be among the foremost to sympathise with the sufferers, and one of the most active and liberal in the distribution of relief. Of course, people would not know that it was Herod, as he would have another *rôle* and bear another name, but seeing his noble, public-spirited exertions, kindly disposition, and solicitude for the welfare of others, he would command great esteem, especially from the religious portion of the community. He might, perhaps, not invariably exhibit the gentle, pure, benevolent life, which is commonly called the Christ-life, but we should certainly hear him spoken of in every direction as a good Christian gentleman.

## CHAPTER V.

## HIS ALLEGED CRUELITIES.

1. Judea contained men more barbarous and unfeeling than Herod.
2. His general character inconsistent with excessive cruelty.
3. He was also restrained by his subordinate position.
4. His acts compared with those of David, Alexander Janneus, and Josephus.
9. The early Christians not all mild and humane.
11. Herod compared with his Roman contemporaries.
12. Exaggerations of Ewald and Dean Farrar.
14. The common practice of judicial torture.
15. Children punished for parental crimes.
16. Quarter not given to unyielding foes.
17. Dangerous rebels slain for want of a safe place of exile.
18. The calumnies fastened on Herod.
19. Story of his ordering a general slaughter of Jews to make the nation mourn at his death.
21. Story of the Massacre of the Innocents.
26. The disorders which afflicted the country after Herod's death.
32. The calumnious charges made against him at Rome.
36. Roman Jews and the spurious Alexander.
37. Herod's three sons who shared his dominions.
38. Herod Agrippa compared with his grandfather.
42. Agrippa junior, and his endeavours to avert the impending war.
45. The real oppressors of Judea were the Jewish insurgents.

THE character of Herod the Great is commonly supposed to be disfigured by one especial blemish—that of excessive cruelty; indeed he is, doubtless, regarded by millions of people as the most inhuman monster that ever lived. This popular conception of him, however, is derived mainly from hostile Jewish legends, and a very little reflection ought to convince those who are accustomed to reflect that it rests on no good historical ground. The most heartless and barbarous people that Judea contained in Herod's days were



just those classes who so bitterly hated him, and who have been accurately depicted in the parable of the Good Samaritan. A certain man travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho was waylaid by robbers, who, not content with taking what money he had, stripped him naked, and beat or stabbed him so unmercifully that he was left half dead. Here we see what cold-blooded cruelty Jewish freebooters were then capable of; the man had given them no provocation whatever, yet they attack him with the ferocity of tigers, and, after stripping him and wounding him, leave him to perish miserably under prolonged sufferings. In a little while a priest, and then a Levite, chance to come along and get sight of the poor half-murdered man; and they, too, are so cold, selfish, and unpitying, that, rather than stay a moment to inquire into his case, or afford him the least succour, they pass by on the other side. Now, cruel as Herod may be thought, he never committed such unprovoked cruelty as was constantly being perpetrated by the brigand population of Palestine; and neither did he act the part of the proud, selfish, heartless priesthood, who thought that they had done their duty in going through a round of ceremonies and prayers. On the contrary, he was naturally a kind, sympathetic, generous ruler; and in his persevering efforts, despite of priestly opposition, to put an end to the brigand cruelties from which the country was suffering, as well as in the strenuous exertions which he made to save his fever-stricken subjects from perishing in a time of famine, he clearly did the work of ten thousand Good Samaritans.

2. The cruelty of Herod—if it may be called cruelty—resembled, at the worst, that of a young policeman who, going from a quiet country life to do duty in a city slum, strikes about rather wildly when set upon by a mob of hooligans, harlots, and

thieves, and wounds some who should have been spared. There is not a single well-founded and credible instance of his having knowingly despatched an innocent person, or committed, for the advancement of his selfish ends, a cold-blooded murder. Where princes have been excessively cruel, it will be found, so far as we have any good authentic information about them, that they spent an idle and luxurious youth, and, from being accustomed to little restraint, grew up to be men of wholly abandoned character. Such was far from being the case with Herod; his good parents did not spoil him with over-indulgence, and his worst enemies never presumed to say that he led a dissolute and immoral life. He delighted in hunting and in theatrical exhibitions, but was not to be enticed by Cleopatra or any one else into habits of licentiousness. It cannot be made out that he ever broke the Jewish marriage law, or abused his sovereign power by seducing from the path of virtue any weak, unguarded woman. Then, his generosity is as undeniable as his courage; and it is difficult to point to a prince, in any age or country, who, in all sorts of political transactions, both of peace and war, was more straightforward and free from treachery. He made a most unfortunate marriage, which involved him in many troubles, and placed a lever to be used against him in the hands of his enemies; but he had, as Dean Stanley observes, "a greatness of soul which might have raised him above the petty intriguers by whom he was surrounded. His family affections were deep and strong. In that time of general dissolution of domestic ties, it is refreshing to witness the almost extravagant tenderness with which, on the plain of Sharon, he founded, in the fervour of his filial love, Antipatris; to the citadel above Jericho he gave the name of his Arabian mother, Cypros; to one of the

towers of Jerusalem, and to a fortress in the valley—which still retains the name—looking down to the Jordan, he left the privilege of commemorating his beloved and devoted brother, Phasael” (Jewish Church, vol. iii. p. 412).

3. The world’s most cruel and tyrannical kings have generally been lawless conquerors, usurpers, and those inheriting an independent throne and responsible to no higher authority. A man naturally fierce and vindictive, is always the more disposed to gratify his malignant passions when he feels his position secure and knows that, whatever injustice he may perpetrate, there is no one to interpose and call him to account. But Herod was very differently circumstanced ; instead of being a spoilt child of fortune, trusting to the prerogative of birth, and girded about with such military defences that he could defy the world’s opinion, he owed his position to merit just as much as any modern viceroy of India, or other provincial governor. During the whole time that he held authority in Palestine he was a tributary ruler, closely watched by able superiors, and with nothing to rely on but his own good behaviour. Had he really been guilty of gross injustice it would have entailed his speedy disgrace and the forfeiture of his throne, for the Roman imperial government, like our own, was accustomed to recall its pro-consuls and depose its dependent kings, whenever they made themselves obnoxious by excessive severity, to say nothing of flagrant or monstrous cruelty. Sylleus, the Arabian, a crafty enemy of Herod, did on one occasion bring such a plausible charge of cruelty and injustice against him at Rome, that Augustus believed it, and became very angry and completely estranged from him in consequence, but it presently turned out that the story of Sylleus was a complete tissue of misrepresentations and

lies. Among his disaffected Jewish subjects were many such accusers as Sylleus, keeping a close watch on his actions for anything that could possibly be made to have the semblance of wrong, that they might get up an embassy and impeach him before the Roman authorities. Augustus, and his vicegerent Agrippa, were men of well known humane disposition, who always stood ready to hear complaints and redress grievances, and they would not have left Herod undisturbed in his government, nor continued to entertain such a high opinion of him, if the charges of cruelty made against him by his enemies had been in their estimation any other than baseless calumnies. Even in punishing capitally the rebellious members of his family, the king did not act the part of an irresponsible despot; he was urged on by other relatives to procure the condemnation of the offenders for his own and their safety; he consulted the best counsellors about him as to the course which he ought to take in such painful circumstances, and appealed also to the judgment of Cæsar.

4. It must be allowed that Herod was occasionally cruel in the sense of being severe, but then he stood as a lion in the midst of wolves and hyenas; he had to deal with a cruel and intractable people, against whom mild measures would have been worse than useless; indeed, leniency on his part would have been mistaken for weakness, and would have encouraged his plotting foes to redouble their exertions. He had no ferocious delight in human suffering, and the judicial pains which he inflicted were invariably directed to a good purpose, they were meant to deter seditious people from conspiring against his government, and involving the community in the horrors of a civil war. It was his great aim to put away race hatred, to appease religious strife, to get the Jewish and Gentile in-



habitants of Palestine to respect one another as citizens of a common country, and live together in concord and peace. No reasonable person will venture to affirm that his opponents had worthier objects in view, or that they wished to establish by less rigorous measures a more effective conciliation and harmony. It is notorious that the Jewish Nationalists were actuated by a contrary disposition, were working for dissension and discord; they inherited the irreconcilable fanaticism of the Maccabees, and were equally bent on expelling the Gentile population from Palestine by fire and sword and holding the land exclusively themselves. If they had succeeded in this object, there would have been no settling down in peace, for the country would have been more than ever troubled by bands of freebooters, and the Jewish factions would have maintained a perpetual domestic strife.

5. Those who compare Herod fairly with his predecessors on the Jewish throne, will find no ground whatever for holding him up to special reprobation on the score of cruelty and blood-guiltiness. The renowned king David first committed adultery with Bathsheba, and then had her husband craftily slain, not for any state reason, not with any view to the public welfare, but simply for the smothering of his own guilt and the consummation of his foul purposes. No such unmitigated villany as this ever stained the private life of Herod. He endeavoured to act justly and in the interest of the nation, and, if he condemned to death some few who were not deserving of such a fate, it was only through being circumvented by false witnesses. Between the two great Jewish monarchs, one now become famous and the other infamous in ecclesiastical story, there is this important difference to be observed. David was extremely partial in his government, generally influenced by a spirit of

prejudice, so that he often punished the innocent and spared the guilty. He slew a great many unoffending Gentiles, while he conferred honour on a like number of predatory Jews. Ten faithful concubines, who had the ill-fortune to be assaulted by Absalom, he shut up in perpetual imprisonment, but the wicked Bathsheba, who had committed adultery, he placed on a throne, and made the first woman in Israel. The honest Amalekite, who brought the tidings of Saul's death, he had instantly slain, while Absalom, who had revolted from him, and was bringing destruction on thousands of his poor subjects, he loved above all the rest of his sons, and was especially desirous to save from punishment. Had Herod been placed in David's position, these scandalous judgments would have been completely reversed; he would have shown scarcely any more favour to his family than to the rest of his subjects, and would have treated Jews and Gentiles with strict impartiality. He would have had Bathsheba imprisoned rather than the ten concubines, and instead of ordering innocent Hittites and Amalekites to be slain, he would have condemned to death the rebellious Absalom, and, by sacrificing this proud, sinful member of his family, would have saved the blood of the suffering nation.

6. In his treatment of the turbulent Jews, Herod was far more lenient and merciful than their Asmonean king, Alexander Janneus. "As to Alexander," says Josephus, "his people were seditious against him, for at the celebration of a festival when he stood up on the altar, and was going to sacrifice, the multitude rose upon him and pelted him with citrons, the law requiring them to have branches of the palm and citron-tree at the feast of tabernacles. They also reviled him as being descended from a captive, and thus unworthy of the dignity of offering sacrifice. At this he was so en-

raged that he slew of them about six thousand " (Ant., XIII. xiii. 5). At a subsequent period many rebellious Jews "fought against Alexander, and, being beaten, were slain in great numbers in several battles. And when he had shut up their strongest army in the city of Bethome, he besieged them there. The city was at length taken, and he brought the captives to Jerusalem, and did one of the most barbarous actions on record. For as he was feasting with his concubines, in view of all the city, he ordered about eight hundred of the rebels to be crucified, and while they were yet alive and suffering, he had the throats of their wives and children cut before their eyes. This was, indeed, by way of requital for the injuries they had done him, although very inhuman ; for he had suffered much from them, and been brought very near upon losing his throne and his life. And they were not content with fighting against him themselves, but brought in also foreigners for that purpose, till he was compelled at length to give up what he had taken from Arabia, Gilead, and Moab. He seems, however, to have been too barbarous in punishing his enemies, and on that account was afterwards called the Thracian. The other rebels that had fought against him, to the number of eight thousand, on observing his ferocity, ran away by night, and continued fugitives for the rest of his lifetime. And he, being now freed from further disturbance, reigned in the utmost tranquility " (Ant., XIII. xiv. 2).

7. Josephus himself, who boasts of being related to the Asmoneans, was in the treatment of enemies, according to his own showing, not greatly distinguished for humanity. When his house at Tarichea was surrounded by an armed mob, who threatened to set it on fire, he induced one of the boldest to enter under pretence of giving him money. "Then," says he, "I had him whipped severely, and I com-

manded that one of his hands should be cut off and hung about his neck, and in this condition was he thrust out to those who sent him. They were now in great consternation at what I had done, and afraid that they should all be served in the like manner if they stayed there, for they supposed that I had with me a stronger force than themselves, so they ran away immediately" (Life, 30). In the "War" he gives a different version of this affair, so that some people are disposed to think that his humanity is not so much affected by the story as his truthfulness. Speaking of himself, in the third person, he says, "Josephus used a second stratagem to escape them, for he got upon the housetop and said he would comply with all their demands if they would but send some of their men in to confer with him. On hearing this the leading rioters and the rulers entered. He then drew them into the most retired part of the house, and having closed the vestibule, flogged them so severely, that their bowels were laid bare. The mob meanwhile stood outside, supposing that their friends were engaged in a lengthened parley. Then he suddenly opened the doors and ejected the men that were scourged, covered with blood, which struck those outside with so much terror that they threw down their arms and ran away" (War, II. xxi. 5).

8. Whether this variable story of Josephus is supposed to have at the bottom a basis of truth, or is regarded as a pure invention—a piece of his war-like rhodomontade—it shows plainly, that in dealing with turbulent Jews, he did not consider it too severe a punishment to cut off their hands and lacerate them within an inch of their lives. Nor has he a word to say against his friend Vespasian, for coolly butchering at Tiberias twelve hundred old and infirm prisoners who could not be disposed of as slaves (III. x. 10). And he declares expressly



in reference to a certain seditious Jew of Cyrene, that Vespasian "brought a deserved punishment on Jonathan, for he was first tortured, and then burnt alive" (VII. xi. 3). It is evident, therefore, that this prejudiced and hypocritical writer was not in a general way shocked at any cruelty. He calls Herod "brutish, and a stranger to humanity," but should have first pulled out the beam from his own eye; for instead of being more merciful, he would, in all probability, have been more severe in dealing with his rebellious countrymen if placed in the king's very difficult and trying circumstances.

9. The early Christians, though in many respects superior in disposition to Josephus, were not, any more than that pretentious Pharisee, entirely free from the harsh spirit and severe judgment which characterised their age. In the 5th Chapter of Acts we have a curious story of two Christian converts being struck dead for mendacity; St. Peter taking upon him the responsibility of acting as both judge and executioner. The capital punishment meted out in this instance seems frightfully disproportionate to the offence. Herod would never have entertained the idea of sentencing people to death simply for delivering unveracious testimony. The Jews in his time were so addicted to lying, especially in defamation of character, that if he had only sent to execution all who circulated calumnious stories about himself, the country would have been nearly depopulated. He would not have punished a single individual severely for such a common failing, nor can we believe that the apostle Peter was such a hard Draconian judge as he has been made to appear. It was not to be expected that Ananias and Sapphira, on first joining the Church and seeking instruction in righteousness, should have freed themselves at once from all their old selfish instincts and crooked practices, and it would have been very

harsh treatment to pronounce for their offence a sentence of expulsion. To strike them dead, however, for failing to give a correct account of the sale of their goods and not even allow them a brief time for repentance, would have been simply atrocious. It would have been especially scandalous on the part of Peter to punish with so much severity a want of truthfulness in newly-converted people, when he had recently been himself in this respect a more flagrant transgressor, lying passionately with oaths and curses.

10. The sudden deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, like some other tragic occurrences reported by the same writer, can only be reasonably explained as either a dramatic or a mythical illusion. It is clear, however, that the author of Acts, and the early Christians generally, believed that the man and his wife were actually struck dead for attempting to deceive the Church, and did not consider the punishment for such an offence unduly rigorous. Any severity exercised by the Church had in their eyes a very different aspect from that of harsh measures resorted to by other rulers for maintaining public order and making their authority respected. The Christian prophets of the first century were extremely arrogant and austere in calling down judgments on the world, especially in predicting the utter destruction and permanent desolation of Rome. Instead of singling out robbers, and other bad people as deserving to be scourged for their flagrant misdeeds, they had no hesitation to condemn without distinction of character whole communities. It would have given them much satisfaction to see their predictions fulfilled, and, if the military power of Herod had been at their disposal for that purpose, there cannot be a doubt that they would have far exceeded anything which he did in the way of cruelty and in-

justice. Herod inflicted severe punishment on some convicted people as a means of deterring others from evil courses; but men, who only had the misfortune to differ from the prophets, would have been chastised unmercifully in a spirit of pure vengeance. And one of the greatest gratifications which they counted upon on entering into paradise was the prospect of beholding in the neighbouring bottomless pit hosts of unbelievers suffer everlasting agony.

11. If we compare Herod's conduct with that of the contemporary Roman generals, we shall find nothing to justify the popular belief of his being exceptionally cruel, but distinct evidence of his having rather a generous and merciful disposition. Out of the deputation of turbulent Jews who went as his accusers to Daphne, Antony selected fifteen of the worst and was going to kill them, but Herod, who had much more reason to desire their riddance, interceded, and obtained their pardon (*Ant.*, xiv. xiii. 1). The Gadarene rebels "that had been delivered up by Agrippa were not punished by Herod, but liberated unhurt, for, indeed, he was remarkable above all other men in being almost inexorable in punishing crimes in his own family, but very generous in pardoning the offences that were committed elsewhere" (xv. x. 3). At the capture of Jerusalem, the infuriated Roman soldiers committed great atrocities, sparing neither age nor sex; but Herod exerted himself to the utmost with expostulations and entreaties to stay the slaughter, and at length offered his fierce allies a liberal ransom to redeem the people from further suffering, with the exception of those leaders who were most involved in guilt. His conduct on this occasion is the more remarkable, when we remember that he had suffered far more provocation from the rebellious inhabitants than the Romans had done, since they were for the most part his inveterate enemies; who

had repeatedly conspired against him, and would have shown him no mercy on this occasion if they could only have got him into their power. Though he had been recently hard pressed by these sanguinary foes, and compelled to fly for his life, so far from vowing a terrible vengeance on confronting them again with his army, he promised a free pardon for all on the condition of their forthwith surrendering the city. The citizens would not accept this gracious offer; under the direction of their priest-king and the Sanhedrin, they held out against him as long as possible, and consequently brought on themselves very great suffering. Yet, even after this further provocation, he was desirous that punishment should only fall on the most guilty; while he condemned to death the corrupt Sanhedrin that had previously condemned him, he spared Pollio and Sameas, the two members who had voted for surrender, and did his best to save from vengeance the defeated multitude.

12. Ewald, speaking of the desultory war which Herod had to carry on in Judea before he could lay siege to Jerusalem, says, "There is no parallel to the cruelty with which, in order to avenge his brother's death, he set on fire five cities near Jericho, slaying at the same time two thousand men. The army of Pappus made a brave resistance, but was defeated, and Herod caused even the unarmed to be strangled in immense heaps" (*History of Israel*, vol. v. p. 415). This vigorous writer can always outdo Josephus in defamation. In the twin narratives which we have of the campaign (*Ant.*, xiv. xv. 12, and *War*, i. xvii. 5, 6), there is nothing to lead one to suppose that Herod in contending with the forces of Antigonus, resorted to any unfair or exceptionally cruel warfare. At the capture of the village of Isanas, many armed men who sheltered themselves in the houses were



crushed by those temporary fortresses being thrown down upon them, and there were probably no unarmed people in the place, certainly none that were "strangled in immense heaps." We are told by Josephus, that he demolished five little cities, and killed two thousand men that were in them, and burned their houses. Evidently in these five little cities, or rather villages, a similar warfare was carried on to that which took place at the capture of Isanas, and Herod subsequently had them burned, as is often done under such circumstances, to prevent them from affording further shelter to the enemy. Ewald would make it appear that he went as a malicious incendiary, and set five cities in a blaze over the heads of the peaceful inhabitants simply to revenge his brother's death. There is no record that he ever set fire to a single tenanted building in his long struggle with the Jewish rebels, but such ruthless warfare they certainly practised against him. When the partisans of Antigonus were beaten in the market-place of Jerusalem, and driven into the Temple, Herod did not imitate the cruelty which Judas Maccabeus displayed at Carnaim, and burn down their sanctuary (1 Macc. v. 44), but to prevent their issuing forth to cause further trouble, occupied some of the neighbouring houses with a guard of armed men. These houses, the fierce insurgents speedily set fire to, and his poor soldiers—accustomed to honourable warfare—were cruelly roasted alive. Undoubtedly Herod was very much grieved when his brother Joseph was slain near Jericho, and felt eager to avenge his death in further combat, as many a soldier-brother has done under similar circumstances, but he was not driven stark mad by his bereavement, nor impelled to wreak vengeance on the unoffending people of five cities.

13. A truly good and liberal-minded man like

Dean Farrar might have been expected to write as charitably of Herod as Dean Stanley has done, and it is a matter for sincere regret that he should be so much under the influence of ancient prejudice as to picture the king in these terms : "His whole career was red with the blood of murder. He had massacred priests and nobles, he had decimated the Sanhedrin . . . . Deaths by strangulation, deaths by burning, deaths by being cleft asunder, deaths by secret assassination, confessions forced by unutterable torture, acts of insolent and inhuman lust, mark the annals of a reign which was so cruel, that in the energetic language of the Jewish ambassadors to the Emperor Augustus, 'the survivors during his lifetime were even more miserable than the sufferers'" (Life of Christ, p. 66). English cruelties in Ireland, India and elsewhere, have been described by intemperate agitators with quite as much eloquence as this, and with quite as good approach to historical fairness and accuracy. We can well understand how a clerical advocate, beset by difficulties, may feel the necessity for such strong pleading ; if Herod, from the records of his life and reign, can be made to appear exceptionally cruel, certain monstrous church legends respecting him will be rendered less incredible. But when those who are not imposed upon by rhetoric, coolly compare the king with his Asmonean predecessors, and with the Roman governors who subsequently ruled the country, they will find him rather distinguished for humanity than for cruelty. Alexander Janneus, as we have already observed, crucified at one time eight hundred Jewish rebels, and the general, Varus, put to death in the same way two thousand, while Herod never subjected the worst of his enemies to such prolonged suffering. He occasionally had people executed, even some of his

own relatives; but they were all bad citizens, criminals and rebels, or were believed to be such; there is not a single well-established charge of his having put to death one whom he knew to be innocent. Neither is there any reliable testimony of his having committed an "act of inhuman lust." As to the "Jewish ambassadors," the vile deputation of seditious people who went to Rome to accuse him when dead, their string of charges was nothing but a babble of the most barefaced calumnies, as the Emperor well understood. Some few persons, whom Herod struck down in his efforts to maintain order, would probably have been better spared, but many whom he spared would have been better slain, since they broke out after his death like ravening wolves, and covered the whole country with blood. Dean Farrar, if placed in the same difficult position, would, doubtless, have granted pardon to every offender, but the turbulent population of Palestine would not have spared him; good, compassionate man, he would have met with no better treatment than the mild, liberal high-priests, when mob violence reigned in Jerusalem (War, iv. v. 2).

14. We must not condemn the barbarities that were practised by Herod in the administration of justice as though they were new cruelties of his own devising, for they were the common inheritance of the age in which he lived. Not being acquainted with our refined methods of cross-examining and eliciting confessions from people who were suspected of crime, he had no hesitation in subjecting them to torture. The same harsh and fallible means of getting at the truth, in judicial investigations, has been resorted to throughout Christendom, even down to the commencement of the 19th century. However inhuman the practice may seem to us, there was in less enlightened times a reason for

resorting to it; and it is on no account to be compared with the older and more barbarous practice of torturing poor war captives which king David enforced, with unmistakable rigour, at the siege of Rabbah (2 Sam. xii. 31). Neither was there any wanton cruelty in the one or two instances of Herod's having certain desperate fanatics subjected to a painful death. In causing the assassins who were captured in the amphitheatre, and the insurgents who hauled down the eagle from the temple gate, to die miserably by fire or other torment, he did not thereby manifest a savage delight in the sufferings of his enemies, but only a wish to deter others from imitating their dangerous example. Ever since the wars of the Maccabees the Jews had been more or less infected with the rage for martyrdom; to create a disturbance in the name of religion, and thus provoke the authorities to punish them capitally, was, in the estimation of thousands, the surest means of obtaining a passport to everlasting felicity. Consequently, as an ordinary violent death had no terror for them, nay, was joyfully welcomed, those who were responsible for maintaining order, deemed it expedient to make their execution frightfully severe. Herod was far from being a persecutor; nothing could be more repugnant to his liberal mind than the narrow bigotry of the Asmonean priest-kings, and, if he burned a few dangerous fomenters of insurrection, who were eager to take his own life, and light up the flames of civil war, he never burned harmless witches, and peaceable heretics, as has been often enough done in our own country.

15. What seems to us the most revolting feature in the exhibition of crucified rebels by Alexander Janneus, is the punishment of innocent and guilty alike,—the putting to death before the eyes of his suffering enemies their unoffending wives and



children. But we have no reason to suppose that he, the king and high-priest, was in this respect more barbarous than the generality of his Jewish subjects. At that period many Jews held the old doctrine that children ought to suffer for the sins of their parents. They often heard this judicial principle affirmed. "The seed of the wicked shall be cut off" (Psalm xxxviii. 28). "Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generation following let their name be blotted out" (cix. 10, 13). "Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes" (Isaiah xiii. 16). "Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers that they do not rise nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities" (xiv. 21). As Herod was born and brought up a strict Jew, it might be supposed that he was influenced to some extent by this prevalent Jewish sentiment in his administration of justice. But he probably held the doctrine enunciated by Ezekiel. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (xviii. 20). It was not customary with him to punish children for the sins of their parents, and his notions of justice were on the whole very much like those entertained by modern Christians. When he was governor of Galilee and had the notorious robber Hezekias slain, with his guilty followers, their relatives, instead of being thankful to escape, hastened to Jerusalem and denounced him as a murderer, so that he had to take his trial on that charge before the Sanhedrin and would have suffered but for the intervention of friends. This unpleasant experience of stirring up a dangerous resentment doubtless made a strong impression on him and hardened him, to some extent, in his future dealings with such enemies. Among excitable and warlike races the disposition to revenge the death of relatives judicially slain, is

so strong a feeling that many families, by persistently indulging in it, have become completely exterminated. In Italy and Spain it has been said as a kind of proverb by those who think of meting out punishment to brigands and other such people, "If you begin to kill, you will have to kill all." For it is well known that if one guilty member of a family or band be executed, there will follow a *vendetta*; the rest will go on revenging and suffering for their revenge till there is not a man left. Herod found the *vendetta* spirit very powerful among the robbers and assassins of Palestine; hence, unjustly as it seems to us, on one or two occasions when greatly provoked, he deemed it politic to strike down not only those who were actually convicted of crime, but their known sympathisers, their relatives and associates, who would otherwise, as he thought, be certain to retaliate and enlarge the measure of their guilt.

16. Those who engage in warfare, however brave and generous, cannot be expected to spare a beaten foe in whom they can place no trust. It is a well understood rule with European armies to forbear striking any of the opposing forces that are wounded and disabled in battle, because men who have thus fallen invariably renounce further combat. But English soldiers have learned to their cost that some of the fierce Mahometan tribes of Africa and Asia neither give nor receive quarter in this way, and cannot be got to appreciate such mutual forbearance; so that in fighting with them they have been frequently killed by wounded enemies treacherously firing on them from the rear. Then, exasperated at being taken advantage of in this way, they have speedily adopted a sterner code of warfare, and have bayoneted without compunction every prostrate foe. The Jewish zealots who fought against Roman domination two thousand years ago were in

character and disposition very much like these Mahometan fanatics who have recently opposed the civilising advances of England. To die for their religion they considered the greatest good fortune, and no terms could be made with them: if not able to conquer after exhausting every fierce effort, they would never bow in abject submission to a superior power that they hated and despised. Consequently, the Romans, after having proof of their inflexible spirit, were reluctantly compelled on several occasions to deal with them more severely than they would have done with a European enemy, and this was especially the case in respect to the ruling family—the Asmoneans. The Roman government has been charged with cruelty in putting to death Aristobulus and his two sons; but, considering the behaviour of the defeated princes, it might be said with greater justice that they ought to have been put to death long before. No terms could be made with them; their promises were unscrupulously broken, and, through being treated for a while with great generosity, they caused between them a succession of calamitous wars, three sieges of Jerusalem, and the sacrifice of many thousands of lives. The Asmoneans were as unconquerable and fiercely revengeful as any of the robber families that infested Palestine, and, the quarrel which the Romans commenced with them being turned over to Herod, it had to be fought out to the bitter end, in spite of all his efforts to effect a reconciliation with them, even in spite of his marriage with Mariamne.

17. England has in recent times been able to save many defeated rebels and other enemies from the penalty of death through the advantage of having in her world-wide dominions several very secure places of banishment. And imperial Rome had similar facilities for placing defeated princes and other foes in safe exile, so as to avoid the terrible

necessity of shedding their blood. But Herod, however well disposed to exercise clemency, had no Tasmania, Bermuda, St. Helena, or Ceylon; and, because he, under these circumstances, slew dangerous rebels occasionally, such as we are enabled to save, we have no more right to reproach him with cruelty than the keepers of our menageries are entitled to cast a similar reproach at the traveller or the colonist who shoots down wild beasts. Instead of being able to restrain his defeated enemies by sending them away into exile, they could much better take advantage of him by escaping beyond the border into Arabia or Syria, so as to become pestilent refugees. The Romans might have befriended him by providing him a suitable place of banishment in one of their western provinces, but they failed to afford him such help towards ridding Palestine of its disturbing elements. Even when they did take charge of those persistent troublers, Aristobulus and his sons, with the intention of detaining them in custody at Rome, they, by some unaccountable negligence, permitted them to escape, and so get back to the old scene of rebellion and redouble their former mischief. Such a political lesson as this, and the annoyance which he frequently experienced from foes beyond the border, may well have had a hardening influence both on Herod and his ministers of state. He felt no savage gratification in inflicting severe punishments, and was naturally inclined to clemency, but he saw, in his straitened circumstances, no other way of preventing frequent outbreaks of rebellion and rendering dangerous enemies innoxious but by sending them to execution.

18. Estimating a man's character after his death is a business very much like that of making up his monetary accounts; all the particulars which may be reckoned in his favour have to be collected and



placed fairly against those which tell to his disadvantage. In constructing a ledger it is deemed a matter of the utmost importance that the balance shall not be deranged by the introduction on either side of spurious items. A person in a bankrupt condition is sometimes made to appear very rich on paper by the placing to his credit a large amount of property in notes, bonds, shares and coupons which are absolutely worthless. On the other hand, another person, really wealthy, is represented by an untruthful accountant as miserably poor, owing to there being pushed in after his decease and permitted to pass unquestioned a number of fictitious debts. The characters of many people have been falsified in precisely the same way by the introduction of mythical stories on one side or the other for the purpose of embellishment or defamation; and it is in the latter respect that great injustice is done to Herod. The king seems to us, after a careful study of his life, a ruler distinguished not for cruelty, but for generosity. He was, on the whole, eminently unselfish, courteous in conversation, certainly not of a morose or cynical disposition; we cannot learn that he ever took a grim pleasure in tormenting people with taunts and gibes; he was readily affected to tears by grief or other strong emotion; he punished those who were convicted of treason more in sorrow than in anger; and we have repeated proof that he was never more happy than when, through the instrumentality of presents or other benefits, he was promoting the happiness of others. This favourable opinion, which we are compelled to entertain of the king, would be seriously modified—indeed, greatly changed for the worse—by a story which Josephus tells of the fiendish malevolence which he displayed on his death-bed, if we could only bring ourselves to believe in its truth. The story is as follows:—

19. "He commanded that all the principal men of the Jewish nation, wherever they might live, should be called to him. Accordingly there came a great number, because the whole nation was called, and death was the penalty of those who disregarded the summons. And now the king was in a wild rage against them all, it mattered not whether they had given him any offence or were perfectly innocent. And, when they had assembled, he ordered them all to be shut up in the Hippodrome, and he sent for his sister Salome and her husband Alexis, and told them that his pains were so great that he should soon die, but was troubled at the thought that he should die unlamented, and without such a mourning as kings generally receive at their death. For he knew that the Jews, who during his lifetime had been ever ready to revolt, would rejoice to learn that he was at length come to his end. And he said, unless his relations would contrive to bring about a genuine mourning at his departure, the nation would only mourn in sport and mockery. He therefore desired them, as soon as he gave up the ghost, to place soldiers round the Hippodrome, who should kill with their darts the imprisoned multitude. By reason of this slaughter, he said, there would be much lamentation throughout the country, and so he should really be honoured at his funeral with a memorable mourning—a mourning truly worthy of kings. He deplored his condition with tears in his eyes, and entreated them, by their faith in God and by the kindness which they owed him as relatives, not to deprive him of this great national mourning. So they promised that they would carry out his commands. Now, any one may easily perceive the temper of this man's mind, not only in the pleasure which he took in doing what he had already done against his own relatives out of the love of life, but by these cruel commands

against the kindred of other people, by which he took care that the whole nation should mourn at his death. For he gave orders that one out of every family should be slain, although they had done nothing wrong against him, and neither were accused of any other crimes, while it is usual with those who have any regard for virtue to lay aside their hatred at such a time, even with respect to those whom they justly esteem their enemies" (Ant., xvii. vii. 5, 6).

20. We are further told that the king attempted to stab himself, and that, when he at length breathed his last, Salome and Alexis, instead of executing his terrible commands, had the prisoners who were shut up in the Hippodrome liberated and sent away to their homes. The whole story of Herod's death-bed devilry is a calumnious Jewish legend, more absurd even than that of the plundering of David's sepulchre, and it shows plainly that nothing could be said against him too monstrous for his ignorant and prejudiced enemies to believe. It is well known that the turbulent Jews frequently insulted, accused, and defied him, when he was full of health and strength and able to lead an army to battle; yet, according to this legend, when the brave old warrior had at length come to the point of death, the whole nation stood in awe of him, and was ready to yield him the most implicit obedience. All the while his commands were reasonable and just, a large portion of his Jewish subjects were fierce and intractable as tigers; but, now that he sent forth orders which were terribly unjust, they at once became as docile as lambs, which suffer themselves to be driven from all quarters and pent up together in a huge market ready to be slain! Some have endeavoured to make the story look less incredible by suggesting that Herod was in a state of delirium when he gave the monstrous command. Dying

people, we know, are accustomed to talk wildly in such a condition, but it is not usual for their relatives to commence carrying out their behests even in matters of trifling concern; and are we to suppose that Salome and Alexis would have taken a single step towards the execution of Herod's raving mandate when it involved the upset of the whole nation? That they did not incur the odium which would have attached to such a tyrannical act as shutting the people up in the Hippodrome with the view to their massacre, nor even publish any such request of the king, is evident, from the fact that he was actually honoured with a splendid funeral, of which the author of the legend had in all probability never heard. Some of the worst enemies of Herod—those who went as a deputation to Rome to accuse and calumniate him after his death—admitted that they had taken part in the national mourning for him, which no people in the world would have done had they known that he intended to drive them into mourning by a general massacre. Even if the malignant story were not confuted by its own intrinsic absurdity, the fact that there was no mention of it by those special denouncers of the king, when doing their utmost to depict him as a cruel tyrant, clearly demonstrates it to be a pure myth, and one thoroughly characteristic of the Jewish mind of that period.

21. This legend of Herod's intended massacre of one out of every family to cause a national mourning at his death, may have helped to suggest the more famous legend of the "Massacre of the Innocents." The latter story, no less than the former, if it is to be accepted as literally true, reflects far more discredit on the Jewish people than on King Herod. The constant trouble which he experienced at the hands of his rebellious and ungrateful subjects was enough to drive any ordinary ruler mad; but, if he



was really worried at length into that unhappy condition of mind, they were not compelled to carry out his extravagant behests, nay, could easily have prevented their execution. Throughout his long public career, he was constantly devising measures which were calculated to promote the welfare of the Jews, who, nevertheless, obstructed his designs in every possible way, petitioned against him repeatedly before the Roman authorities, and even conspired to effect his assassination. On the occasion of his extirpating a band of robbers, who had ravaged the Syrian border, he was denounced as a murderer, summoned before the Sanhedrin, and only saved by the intervention of Sextus Cæsar. It was bad enough for the Jews thus to insult, threaten, and oppose Herod, as they always were doing, while he acted the part of a wise and just ruler; but, if we are to believe the story of the Bethlehem massacre, they were still more wicked at heart and even devilish; for no sooner did the poor worried king become mad, and proceed to perpetrate a monstrous cruelty, than their opposition to him instantly ceased. These people, who raised a tremendous outcry when a number of pestilent brigands were slain, beheld some years afterwards a whole city of innocent children ruthlessly murdered without offering the slightest resistance or making the faintest protest; nay, from the remarkable silence of contemporary writers on the subject, they must have been at very great pains to hush up the unparalleled atrocity, and keep it from the knowledge of Cæsar and the world.

22. The early communistic Christians had doubtless many virtues, but they had no love for kings and other secular rulers, and neither had they a very scrupulous regard for truth. They looked on all Gentile princes as tyrants and persecutors, and whatever monarch reigned in Judæa at the time of

Christ's birth would in their imagination have been certain to hear of the wondrous infant with a feeling of jealousy, and seek by all possible means to compass his destruction. Where any obscurity existed in the lives of distinguished prophets and saints,—and their birth and childhood were generally obscure,—there was always a fruitful ground for conjecture, and conjecture gave rise to myth; thus their coming into the world was supposed to be accompanied by a number of signs and wonders presaging their future eminent career. Few unprejudiced scholars are now prepared to dispute that the birth stories prefixed to the gospels of Matthew and Luke are of this legendary character. Like the fable of Herod's attempt to force the nation into mourning for him, they both clash with historical facts. The author of the first story could have had no very clear knowledge of the king's tributary position, or he would have seen that the perpetration of such a massacre would have been the surest means to bring about the very evil which he is supposed to be aiming to avert—the loss of his government. He is also wrong in respect to chronology, for Herod died four years before the date which has been fixed as the commencement of our era; and, even if Jesus was actually born so early, when his birth was announced, the king must have been at the point of death. The author of the second story has made a still greater anachronism by introducing the taxing or census of Cyrenius in order to bring the parents of Jesus to Bethlehem, for that census did not take place till ten years after Herod's death. It is certain, too, that the genealogies of poor Jewish families had not been strictly kept up, and, even if they had been preserved, the Roman government would not have been so insane as to compel the people to migrate to the exact localities occupied by their forefathers

in the time of the ancient monarchy. Least of all, would they have thought of forcing such a reminder of past national independence on any persons who were supposed to be of royal lineage.

23. The beautiful legend of angels announcing an advent of peace and goodwill to the shepherds at Bethlehem is very unfitly followed by the perpetration of a diabolical massacre in that city. And the wise men cannot be said to act wisely in putting needless apprehensions for the security of his position into the mind of an old king, and thus inciting him to commit such an atrocity. We can very well imagine at the present day a somewhat similar occurrence; we will suppose a rustic freeholder to have got old and childish, and that a party of students go to him and make it appear by equivocal language that there has recently been born a claimant to his property. The old man, on hearing this announcement, is in a dreadful worry, under the mistaken belief that he may soon have to turn out of house and home, and to avert such a stroke of ill-fortune he goes presently in a fit of desperation and takes the supposed claimant's life. On the tragedy becoming known, the poor old freeholder is pitied rather than blamed for what he has done to safeguard his estate, but the public denounce in unmeasured terms the students who went to him with words conveying a wrong import and frightened him into an act of criminality. Those who alarm people needlessly, so that they resort to violent measures for their protection, are in respect to any harm that so results by far the most guilty of wrong. If the wise men of the legend had been truly wise and guided by God, they would have speedily allayed Herod's groundless fears by assuring him that the young child of great promise, whose birth was announced, would be a spiritual ruler, and not

a claimant of his throne or one who would interfere with his government.

24. The legend of the Bethlehem massacre was, in respect to its main features, undoubtedly copied from an older Jewish legend which is to be found in the pages of Josephus. In his account of the birth and early life of Moses, he says, "One of those sacred scribes, who are very sagacious and truthful in predicting future events, told the king that about this time there would be a child born to the Israelites, who, if he were reared, would succeed in raising his own people and humbling the Egyptians, and besides would excel all men in virtue and obtain a glory which would be remembered through all ages. This was so feared by the king, that, according to the scribe's opinion, he ordered every male child of the Israelites to be cast into the river and drowned. This was a very severe infliction on the people, for not only were parents compelled to assist in the destruction of their children, but this slaughter was meant to lead to the extirpation of their race. But no one can defeat the purposes of God, though he contrive with that view ten thousand subtle devices. For this child foretold by the sacred scribe was brought up and concealed from the Egyptian midwives and watchers appointed by the king, and that which was predicted of him truly came to pass" (Ant., II. ix. 2). The story in continuation tells of the saving of Moses by Thermuthis, the king's daughter, in accordance with the version given in the book of Exodus.

25. We should scarcely be going too far, if we said that all Herod's reputed cruelties may be resolved into other people's calumnies. It is clear that he was grossly traduced by fabulists after his death, and it is no less certain that he was slandered by his numerous political enemies in his lifetime. There was, for instance, a story current that



he had murdered his brother, Pheroras ; “ although Herod had so great an affection for him to the last day of his life, yet was a report spread abroad that he had killed him by poison ” (War, i. xxix. 4). And the allegation that he instigated the drowning of his brother-in-law, Aristobulus, rested entirely on popular suspicion. Then, even when it can be shown that he actually condemned to death those who were not guilty, it was through being imposed upon by other people’s lies. It will, perhaps, be said that Herod was falsely suspected of murder in one or two instances, only because he bore a bad character and was well known to be capable of such foul deeds. As reasonably might it be contended that English generals would not have been falsely charged with barbarity by the Boers, if they had not shown by previous cruelties a manifest disposition to shed innocent blood. The fact is, that the evidence of character here, the ground for believing people to be guilty in a particular instance from a knowledge of their general guiltiness, tells much more strongly against the accusers than the accused. Herod’s Jewish enemies were notoriously addicted to calumny ; a people more unscrupulous in slandering their opponents probably never existed ; and, as it is clearly proved that they libelled him in some instances, their testimony against him on other occasions is thus greatly weakened, and must, necessarily, be regarded with suspicion.

26. In another chapter, when we come to treat of Herod’s troubles with his Asmonean relatives, the charge trumped up against him of having caused the death of Aristobulus will be fully examined. We are here concerned not so much with his disturbed household as with his disaffected subjects ; and perhaps the best vindication of his character from the accusations of cruelty repeatedly

hurled at him is that which is afforded by the subsequent history of the Jewish people. Had he been the barbarous tyrant that Josephus and others would make him appear, and his subjects an innocent and righteous community ground down to the dust by his continual oppression, they would, after his death, have lifted their meek heads and found their condition greatly ameliorated; but, when free from his authority and guidance, they were actually seen to be more turbulent and disaffected than ever, and their fortunes rapidly became worse. One of the chief grievances that they had to complain of during his reign,—the placing over the gate of the Temple which he erected an emblematic eagle,—would in the eyes of any other people have been no grievance at all. The eagle was hauled down in open defiance of his authority, and he punished the ringleaders of the insurrectionary movement with death, as any other ruler would have done in like circumstances. But the rebellious spirit which existed in the city was still unsubdued; the friends of those who fell, like the friends of the robbers and assassins who had previously fallen, at once proclaimed among themselves a vendetta. The king soon after died, and, when the public mourning was over, many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem raised a loud lamentation for the rioters who had been killed for the outrage committed at the Temple gate, and desired that their death should be avenged. Knowing that Herod's son, Archelaus, was to have the succession, they crowded about the Temple in a tumultuous manner, and besought him to reverse some of the judgments of his late father, and especially to depose Joazar, whom Herod had made high-priest, and confer the office on one who was more zealous for the Law. This unreasonable and most insolent petition naturally offended the prince, but he, nevertheless,

granted it, from an earnest desire to conciliate the people and ingratiate himself in their favour before setting out on his intended journey to Rome.

27. So far from being appeased by the concessions made to them, the disaffected multitude only became more emboldened and speedily increased their demands. "Archelaus was much provoked by these renewed clamours, but he refrained from calling the authors to account, lest a collision should be brought about with the populace which would have the effect of delaying his journey. He endeavoured, therefore, to quiet the malcontents by persuasion rather than by force, and sent his general to them in a private manner to exhort them to desist from making a disturbance. This officer, on reaching the Temple, was immediately assailed and driven off with stones before he had time to utter a word. Other messengers, who went in succession to reason with them, were treated in like manner, and it soon became apparent that, if they were permitted to gain an increase of numbers, they would proceed to open insurrection. The feast of unleavened bread, which the Jews call the Passover, was also now at hand,—a festival which is celebrated with a great number of sacrifices,—and a vast multitude came from the provinces to attend the solemnity. Some of the rioters now stood in the Temple bewailing the two rabbins, Judas and Matthias, whom Herod had put to death, and they obtained their living by begging in order to support their sedition. Archelaus became alarmed at this proceeding, and to prevent the infection from spreading through the multitude, secretly despatched an officer with a cohort of soldiers to restrain by force those who were propagating a spirit of revolt. Irritated by their approach, the populace, in a mass, assailed the cohort and killed many with stones; the officer himself was wounded,

and only made his escape with much difficulty. After thus having put the soldiers to flight, the multitude proceeded with their sacrifices as if nothing serious had occurred. Archelaus was now convinced that the insurgents would not be repressed without bloodshed, and therefore sent his entire army against them, the infantry in close files through the city, and the cavalry by the plain. Then, falling suddenly on the multitude while they were sacrificing, the soldiers slew about three thousand of them and dispersed the rest in the neighbouring mountains. They were followed by the heralds of Archelaus, who commanded the people all to retire to their homes, whither they accordingly went, and the festival was deserted" (War, II. i. 3).

28. Soon after the suppression of this disturbance, Archelaus proceeded to Rome, to obtain from Cæsar the confirmation of his father's testament, which gave him the succession. At Cæsarea he was met by Sabinus, the procurator of Syria, who was going up to Jerusalem to protect Herod's treasures, but was detained here by the arrival of Varus, the president. When, however, Archelaus and his friends had sailed for Rome, and Varus had returned to Antioch, Sabinus hurried on to Jerusalem, to take possession of the palace, and prevent the Jews from making further insurrection. He summoned the governors of the forts, together with the administrators of the revenue, and endeavoured to obtain from them an account of the public finances, and also to possess himself of the castles. But the governors, mindful of the injunctions of Archelaus, refused to deliver them up, and professed to hold them for Cæsar rather than for Archelaus. On the approach of the feast of Pentecost, a great multitude of people collected, more from indignation at the Romans than with the view to join in the customary services. Vast numbers arrived from Galilee,



Idumea and Perea beyond Jordan; but the chief contingent, and likewise the most ardent, came from all the neighbouring parts of Judæa. Dividing themselves into three sections, they formed three camps, one on the north of the Temple, another on the south, near the Hippodrome, and the third beside the palace on the west. Having thus completely surrounded the Roman forces, they held them under siege. Sabinus, dreading at once their numbers and determination, despatched courier after courier to Varus, entreating him to hasten to his succour, or the legion would be soon cut to pieces. Having in the mean time ascended the highest tower of the fortress, which was named, after Herod's brother, Phasaël, he signalled with his hand to the soldiers of the legion to advance and attack the enemy, but would not venture to place himself at their head. The soldiers, obedient to this signal, rushed forward into the Temple, and engaged in a fierce struggle with the insurgent Jews. So long as they were not assailed from above, their superior skill proved more than a match for their undisciplined foes. But when a large body of Jews mounted the galleries, and, from that position of vantage, threw down their missiles, many soldiers fell, nor could they easily return the blows of an enemy perched aloft, while they also had to maintain a hard combat with those who stood around.

29. "The Romans, being thus harassed both from above and below, set fire to the colonnades, which were works to be admired both for their extent and beauty. Many of those who had climbed them were now suddenly enveloped in the flames; others leaped down on their opponents, and were so slain; while some, in despair, threw themselves down headlong from the rear, or fell on their own swords. Those who crept down and fought with the Romans

were easily beaten, and at length, some being slain and others dispersed, the soldiers discovered the sacred treasure, and took of it about four hundred talents, while Sabinus got together all that remained. But the destruction which the Romans were making brought together against them a stronger body of adversaries, who, surrounding the palace, threatened all with death unless they withdrew from the city, and they promised that Sabinus should come to no harm if he would only retire with his legion. There were many of the king's troops who now deserted to the Jews, but the most warlike division, consisting of three thousand men of Sebaste, still adhered to the Romans. Rufus commanded the cavalry of this body, and Gratus, the infantry, and they were both men of such energy and ability that, even without authority, they would have done much to make the side which they espoused victorious. The Jews, however, pressed the siege, and called on Sabinus, and his troops to depart, and no longer hinder them from obtaining once more their nation's independence. Sabinus would have willingly retired, only he distrusted their promises, and suspected that they were only luring him forth to destruction; and, as he further hoped that succour from Varus would soon arrive, he resolved to prolong the defence.

30. "Varus, the President of Syria, on receiving the despatches that were sent by Sabinus, was in great apprehension for the safety of the legion. So he took with him the two legions under his command, and four squadrons of horse, and marched to Ptolemais, having ordered some auxiliary forces to meet him at that city. He also received fifteen hundred armed men from the people of Berytus. When the other auxiliaries reached Ptolemais, and Aretas, the Arabian, from enmity to Herod's family, brought a large accession of horse and foot, Varus

at once sent a portion of the army, under the command of his friend Caius, against the insurgents of Galilee. This general defeated all who opposed him, took the city of Sepphoris, burned it, and reduced the inhabitants to bondage. Varus next marched with his whole force to Samaria, but he spared that city, as it had taken no part in the insurrection, and encamped near the village of Arus. This belonged to Ptolemy, one of Herod's chief friends, and therefore it was plundered by the Arabians. The army next advanced to Sampho, another fortified village, which the Arabians also plundered, carrying off all the public money that fell into their hands. The country was thus full of fire and bloodshed from these people, and nothing could stand against their ravages. Emmaus was found to be deserted by its people, and in retaliation for the slaughter of some Roman soldiers there, Varus ordered it to be burned. He next marched on to Jerusalem, and, as soon as his army came in sight, the Jews began to break up their camps and disperse themselves about the country. The citizens opened their gates to him, and declared that they had been forced to admit the multitude on account of the festival, but had not participated in their revolt, for they were besieged together with the Roman legion. Prior to this, however, he was met by Joseph, the cousin of Archelaus, with Gratus and Rufus, who led the men of Sebaste, and also those of the legion. Sabinus, not daring to come into his sight, had previously withdrawn from the city, and retired to the sea-coast. Varus having ordered a division of his forces to scour the country in search of the authors and leaders of the insurrection, great numbers were soon arrested, and such as appeared less guilty he imprisoned; but the worst of those captured, to the number of about two thousand, he crucified " (War, II. iii. 2-4; v. 1, 2.)

31. Herod never punished the rebellious Jews on so large a scale, and with so much severity ; and, had he still been alive, order would have been preserved and the nation saved from all this terrible suffering. The robbers of Trachonitis, some years before, paid a high compliment to his power of tranquillising the country when they broke out in insurrection on hearing a rumour of his death. The fanatical insurgents who hauled down the eagle from the Temple gate would not have ventured on that daring outrage only from hearing it announced that the great king who had so long kept them in awe was just about breathing his last. And now, at length, when it was known, beyond dispute, that he was really dead and buried, there was something like a restoration of chaos ; it set in motion all the disorderly elements throughout the country. While Jerusalem was in a state of insurrection and doubly besieged, the brigand chiefs, who had been thoroughly subdued, were again lifting up their heads in the provinces, and robbery and anarchy were spreading in every direction. "Great disturbances occurred in many places, and an opportunity was afforded several ambitious men to set themselves up as kings. In Idumea, two thousand soldiers who had served under Herod got together and took arms and fought against the royal forces. They were opposed by Achiabus, the king's cousin, who fought against them warily from the most defensible positions. Then, in Sepphoris of Galilee, one Judas, son of the robber Hezekias, who had formerly been slain by Herod, got together a body of men, broke open the royal stores, armed his followers, and made war on all who were in authority round about. In Perea, also, Simon, who had been a servant of the king, relying on his stature and handsome appearance, put a diadem on his head and marched through the country with a



band of robbers. He burnt down the royal residence at Jericho, and other habitations of the wealthy, and in this way found it more easy to plunder them by snatching the spoils out of the fire. And he would have burnt down every important house in the country, only that he was met by Gratus, the commander of the royal infantry, with the Trachonite archers and the soldiers of Sebaste. Many fell in the conflict, and Gratus slew Simon himself as he fled along a narrow valley, giving him a side-blow which cut off his head. The palace of Betharamathon, near the Jordan, was also burned down by another band of seditious people who came out of Perea. There was moreover, at this time, a certain shepherd named Athrongeus, who put a diadem on his head and ventured to set up for a king. It was his great bodily strength and courage that made him aspire to this dignity, and he had four brothers to assist him who greatly resembled himself. He put a troop of armed men under each of his brothers that they might overrun the country, while he, as sovereign, attended to matters of state. Their avowed orders were to kill only Romans and royalists, but others who fell into their hands were put to death if it seemed likely to add to their gains. They surrounded an entire cohort of Romans at Emmaus, while they were carrying food and arms to the legion, when Arius, the centurion, and forty men were slain, and the rest only escaped through the coming of Gratus and the soldiers of Sebaste. These men were all eventually subdued by Archelaus, Gratus, and Ptolemy; but in the mean time they perpetrated great outrages, both against their own people and foreigners, and filled the whole of Judea with robbery and bloodshed" (War, II. iv. 1, 3).

32. Beyond a doubt, more oppression and cruelty

were perpetrated throughout Palestine within a few months after Herod's death than there had been wrought during the whole previous period of his undisputed reign. One would have thought that, after this terrible outbreak of anarchy, his most irreconcilable enemies, if they were not actually of the robber class, would have been constrained to say much in his commendation, and do their best to rally round and strengthen the throne of his successor. On Archelaus proceeding to Rome, however, for the confirmation of his father's testament, a deputation, consisting of fifty of the principal citizens, followed him there to oppose his claims, when they ought to have remained behind and exerted themselves diligently to compose the disturbed country during his absence. No right-minded and honourable Jew could have appeared before Cæsar at such a juncture without feeling some sense of shame for the crimes and outrages which, since Herod's death, had disgraced every part of his dominions, nor without disclaiming, in the least emphatic manner, all sympathy with those lawless proceedings. But these "ambassadors" were undoubtedly proud, ill-humoured, grumbling Pharisees, forgetful of their own faults while continually carping at others, and the effrontery which they displayed at the Roman court has probably never under like circumstances been paralleled. Talk of the Jews being an oppressed people; there was no need to point to their recent turbulence and lawlessness in contradiction of this; the very manner of their representative pleaders, who stood and poured forth such unmeasured and virulent charges against the late king in the presence of his son, proved conclusively that their alleged wrongs were all feigned; their tone would have been more humble if they had spoken from an experience of real oppression. We are told that Augustus convened a

council in the Temple of Apollo, on the Palatine Hill, where Archelaus and his friends stood on one side and his enemies on the side opposite, while a neutral party was formed by those members of Herod's family who were in favour of Antipas.

33. The accusing party, on being permitted to speak, commenced with a recapitulation of Herod's iniquities, stating that they had found him by experience not a sovereign, but the most barbarous of tyrants. And whereas he had destroyed multitudes of people, so many as no other history records, such were the miseries endured by those who survived that they were to be accounted happy who had perished. For he had applied the torture, not only to the individual bodies of his subjects but to whole cities, dismantling those of his own kingdom while he beautified those of other nations, and complimenting foreign people by shedding the blood of the Jews. Instead of their ancient prosperity and hereditary laws, he had made all kinds of innovations and had filled the nation with the greatest iniquity and poverty. When upon unjust pretensions he had slain any of the nobility, he took away their estates, and when he permitted any of them to live he condemned them to forfeit their possessions. For, besides the annual imposts laid upon every one of them, they were obliged to make liberal presents to him, and also to his servants and friends, because there was no other way of being saved from unjust violence. In short, the Jews had undergone more sufferings and hardships from Herod in a few years than their forefathers had endured in the whole previous interval since their departure from Babylon. They would say nothing of the corruption of the chastity of their virgins, and the reproaches laid on their wives for incontinence, and those things acted in an insolent and inhuman manner, because it was desirable for the

sufferers to have such things concealed. But Herod put such abuses on them as would not have been inflicted even by a wild beast if put in the same ruling position. And, though they had passed through many subversions and alterations of government, their history gave no account of any calamity that they had been under to compare with what he had brought on their nation. It was for this reason that they thought they might justly welcome Archelaus as king, feeling sure that whoever took the government would be better than Herod, and they joined him in the mourning for his father and wished him good success. But this Archelaus, as if apprehensive that he should not be thought the genuine son of Herod, had commenced his reign by the murder of three thousand citizens, thus offering to God as many sacrifices of men for his government as there were sacrifices of beasts that filled the Temple at the festival. Those who were left alive after so many miseries were now resolved to face their hardships, and, like soldiers in battle, receive their stripes in front, and not, as hitherto, on their backs. Now, what they chiefly desired of the Romans was, that they might be delivered from kingly and the like forms of government and put under the authority of the presidents of Syria. And thus it would soon be demonstrated that the Jews, who were slandered as a seditious people and fond of changes, would live in an orderly manner if they had anything like moderate rulers set over them.—Now when the Jews had made this accusation Nicolaus stood up and vindicated the kings, and said that the Jewish nation was hard to rule and naturally rebellious. As for Herod, since he had never had such gross charges brought against him in his lifetime,—charges which, if true, would have brought on him due punishment,—it was not right that they should now be made for the first



time after his death. He also affirmed that Archelaus only punished the Jews because he was forced to do so in order to put a stop to their outrages and suppress the insurrection. For they took pleasure in sedition through not having learned to submit to justice and the laws, but desired to be above the laws and now made their complaints without reason. This was the substance of what Nicolaus said " (Ant., xvii. xi. 2, 3; War, ii. vi. 2).

34. Josephus has taken care to abridge the speech of Nicolaus in defence of Herod, and we cannot help suspecting that he has also embellished that of the accusers with his inflated Oriental rhetoric. Their monstrous impeachment of the king, like the fables which were written respecting him, certainly appears more likely to have been composed nearly a hundred years after his death by some imaginative person, under no sense of check, than to have been uttered in the presence of his best friends when he was only recently dead, and his loss was being so much felt by the disordered nation. Assuming, however, that such a speech was actually delivered, it must be allowed that these fifty Jews who went as an accusing deputation to Rome, were for downright impudence worthy disciples of the turbulent body who, some forty years previously, appeared before Antony at Daphne and Tyre, and that they made a very fair commencement of the flood of posthumous defamation which was to be directed against the king. No better apology for his rule than that furnished by their outrageous indictment could possibly be conceived, and in this light it must have been regarded by Augustus Cæsar. Had they any sense of justice and fairness whatever in respect to political opponents; had they the smallest amount of conscientious feeling; they would have freely admitted that Herod, however bad a king on the

whole, had at one time and another acted with generosity and conferred some benefits on the nation. They would have further confessed that, though they considered the Jews in general very orderly and obedient subjects, they had in some few instances engaged in unjustifiable riots and committed serious outrages which could only be repressed by armed force. But these intemperate and unscrupulous pleaders would concede nothing in behalf of justice either one way or the other. The violent people, who raised a tumult in Jerusalem and stoned to death a number of honest soldiers sent to preserve the peace, were in their eyes good citizens who had done nothing wrong. On the other hand, Archelaus, who, after exhausting every moral effort to compose the insurgents and seeing his men brutally slain by them, at length ventured to call together the rest of his army and repel force by force, they denounced as a wholesale murderer. With the same perverted vision, they, of course, endorsed the opinion of the Sanhedrin, that Herod was a murderer for slaying the brigands who, under the command of Hezekias, ravaged the Syrian border. This act of justice was, in their estimation, "complimenting foreigners by shedding the blood of the Jews." How was it possible for any honest ruler to content a people so utterly unreasonable as these advocates, who, blinded by prejudice, believed that they belonged to a privileged race? They wanted, like the rest of the Nationalists, to be allowed to cross the border and tread the Gentiles under foot, in the manner of their glorious and pious ancestors, while to be compelled to live peaceably, and treat other communities as they wished to be treated, was to them an unendurable oppression.

35. Ewald pays a very poor compliment to the Jews of Palestine when he speaks of this deputa-

tion of fifty pleaders who went to Rome as being "many of the best men in the nation." The robbers and insurgents, who took up arms after Herod's death and spread terror and confusion over the country, did not disguise their political aims for a moment; they avowed their hostility to Rome, and on the score of candour, at least, were entitled to respect. But these eloquent accusers, who went in entire sympathy with the rebels to the Roman court, cunningly masked their designs in the presence of Cæsar, and were full of hypocrisy and falsehood. After denouncing Herod and Archelaus in the most extravagant terms, they endeavoured to make it appear that they were themselves good, loyal Imperialists, sincerely attached to the Roman connexion. They represented that their chief desire was to be delivered by Cæsar from kingly forms of government and put under the authority of the President of Syria. This plea was only a lying pretence; all the recent commotions, as they well knew, originated with the pulling down of the Imperial eagle; and what they really wanted was to find some means to break away entirely from the control of Rome, and become an independent nation. It was not for his being a king that they hated Herod, but because he opposed their patriotic aspirations, treated Jews and Gentiles alike, and persisted in maintaining loyal and friendly relations with Cæsar. They wanted at the head of the nation an aggressive monarch—a great robber chief—one who, like Athrongeus, Simon, and other recent upstarts, would put a diadem on his head, and lead them forth to plunder and destroy on such an extensive scale as to revive the glory of the Asmoneans.

36. We are told that these pleaders, who went to Rome to accuse Herod and Archelaus, and declare that they wished to be delivered from the rule

of kings, were joined in their demonstration by upwards of eight thousand Jews who resided in that city. An incident which occurred there soon afterwards serves to show in a very striking manner the character of these Roman Jews, and the worth of their anti-monarchical principles. Archelaus, was probably not the best of Herod's sons, nor the most competent to succeed him in the government; but no unprejudiced student of history can doubt that he was a worthier man than Alexander, who was executed for treason, even if that severe punishment was not fully deserved. Yet these Roman Jews, who joined in the opposition to Archelaus, held the vicious Alexander in the highest esteem, just because he lived at bitter variance with his father, and had in his veins some of their own Jewish blood. And, though he had been now some years dead, they were easily persuaded to bestow royal honours on a rascally impostor of Sidon, by whom he was personated. This man, after deceiving the Jews of Crete, Melos, and other places, with his artful pretensions, and obtaining from them large sums of money, passed on to Rome. "When the report got circulated that he was coming to Rome, the whole multitude of Jews there went forth to meet him, ascribing it to divine Providence that he had so unexpectedly escaped death, and being very joyful on account of his mother's family. And, when he at length arrived in the city, he was carried on a royal litter through the streets, and he wore, at the expense of those who entertained him, such ornaments as usually adorn kings. The multitude also flocked about, and made loud acclamations to him, and nothing was omitted that was thought fit to honour a prince so wonderfully preserved" (Ant., xvii. xii. 1).

37. This spurious Alexander pretended that the executioners appointed to slay him and his brother



Aristobulus, slew other men in their stead and permitted themselves to escape. He was a man of plebeian origin, somewhat resembling Alexander in appearance, but he soon made a confession of his imposture to Cæsar, who compelled him to labour among his rowers, and thus condemned him to penal servitude for life. Herod's dominions were divided between his three sons, Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip. The subsequent information furnished respecting them is very brief; but ten years afterwards Archelaus was deprived of his government and banished to Gaul. Antipas ruled Galilee for over forty years, when he was also deposed by the Emperor Caligula and banished to Spain, while Philip ruled the Syrian territory of Trachonitis for thirty-seven years, and died there among his subjects in great honour (*Ant.*, xviii. iv. 6). We have no reason to suppose that Archelaus was a man of inferior virtue to his brother Philip or a worse ruler, and the difference in the measures of success which they achieved was probably owing entirely to the difference between their respective subjects. The Roman procurators, who succeeded Archelaus, were no more able than he to cure the Jews of their visionary aspirations and make them an orderly, law-abiding, and contented people. Judas of Galilee and his three sons kept the country in a state of disturbance for several years in their attempts to imitate the exploits and revive in their family the glory of the Maccabees. And, when these marauding heroes were all captured and slain, there soon arose others of the same stamp, who went about with loud pretensions of religion and patriotism, plundering many villages, and doing their best to goad the people into a general war for the recovery of their national independence. The conduct of those who revolted against the procurators, from first to last, was very different

from that of an orderly population rising under virtuous leaders to free themselves from a genuine oppression. "As for the affairs of the Jews, they grew worse and worse continually; for the country was again filled with robbers and impostors who deluded the multitude . . . . And again the robbers stirred up the people to make war with the Romans, and said they ought not to obey them at all, and, when any would not consent to this, they set fire to their villages and plundered them" (Ant., xx. viii. 5, 6).

38. When Herod's two sons, by Mariamne, were condemned to death for treason by the council of Berytus, he took a very compassionate interest in the welfare of the orphan children that they left, and one of these children—Herod Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus—was destined eventually to reunite his divided kingdom. Soon after the death of his uncle Philip, who left no sons, the Emperor Caligula, with whom he was in great favour, conferred on him the government of Trachonitis. A few years later the same emperor banished his other uncle, Herod Antipas, for no very good reason, and made him his successor in the government of Galilee. The next emperor, Claudius, gave him also Judea, and the other dominions which had been long before taken from his uncle, Archelaus, and put under Roman procurators, so that he at length ruled the same extent of territory as his grandfather, Herod the Great. And this restoration of his kingdom, in its entirety, was a very great compliment paid to the memory of Herod; it showed that the Romans, as they saw things gradually getting worse in Palestine, seriously felt the loss of him, and were desirous, as far as possible, to reconstitute his system of government. Herod Agrippa could not fail to be more acceptable to the Jews than his grandfather, for, in the first place, he would not be

looked upon as an Idumean intruder; then, they had no longer any rival princes to prefer before him, and he actually had in his veins some of the Asmonean blood. Moreover, they had been so severely handled in recent years by the Roman procurators, that they were at length prepared to welcome and appreciate the more conciliatory rule of a sovereign who professed their own religion and was looked upon as one of themselves. Josephus does not take into consideration the diminished prejudice and comparatively few difficulties which he had to encounter during his short reign of three years at Jerusalem, but endeavours to make out that he was more respected than his grandfather on account of his greater virtues and more clement disposition. He writes of him as follows:—

39. “Now this king was by nature very beneficent and liberal, and very desirous to oblige people with handsome presents. He took the greatest delight in making himself popular by his numerous gifts. He was very unlike that Herod who reigned before him, for that king was ill-natured and severe in his punishments, showing no mercy whatever to those whom he disliked. And every one perceived that he was more friendly to the Greeks than to the Jews. For he gave foreigners presents in money, and adorned their cities by the erection of baths, theatres, temples, and porticoes, but he did not vouchsafe to raise one of the least edifices in any Jewish city, nor to make them a donation that was worth mentioning. But Herod Agrippa was of a mild disposition and equally liberal to all men. He was humane to foreigners, and made them very sensible of his benevolence, and he was known to be compassionate. He loved to reside constantly at Jerusalem, and was remarkably strict in his observance of the Jewish law. And he kept himself pure, nor did he suffer any day

to pass without its appointed sacrifice " (Ant., xix. vii. 3).

40. The comparison which Josephus thus draws between Herod the Great and his grandson Herod Agrippa shows how utterly worthless his judgment is in this matter, and to what an extent he is blinded by his Jewish prejudice. Both these kings were distinguished for great liberality in giving presents; but the elder Herod was just, as well as generous, since he paid his way honourably, while the other, who had been luxuriously brought up, was ever getting involved in debt. Seeing that the first Herod erected the magnificent Temple and many other public buildings in Judea, and gave on one occasion eighty thousand measures of wheat to relieve distressed Jews, the cool assertion of Josephus, that he did not deign to raise the meanest edifice in their cities, nor to make them any present worth mentioning, would have done credit to the fifty accusers who calumniated the king at Rome. He expended indeed far more in liberality to his own subjects than he bestowed on foreigners, and it was only from being full of discontent and ingratitude, and actuated by a strong spirit of jealousy towards the neighbouring Gentiles that many Jews endeavoured to make out the reverse. It is remarkable that Herod Agrippa imitated his grandfather in erecting public edifices for foreigners without apparently exciting in Judea any strong disapprobation. Then the Jews were greatly scandalised at the first Herod's patronising Gentile sports, which they considered a breach of their Law, and even formed a plot for his assassination; yet the grandson did the same thing, and, excepting that he was denounced on one occasion by a single bigot whom he easily pacified, caused thereby no commotion. Josephus represents Herod Agrippa as being far the more clement of the two, but this



is not apparent to unprejudiced minds; it must be remembered that he had to encounter comparatively little of such opposition as calls forth severity, and it is clear that he was not backward in shedding blood when there was occasion for it, since we are told that he put to death at one time no less than fourteen hundred criminals, and made of their slaughter a public spectacle (*Ant.*, xix. vii. 5).

41. Herod Agrippa died, after a short illness, at Cæsarea, where he went in great state to attend a public festival in honour of his patron the Emperor Claudius. Some of the Greek inhabitants of Cæsarea, and the soldiers stationed there, seem to have borne him ill-will, and to have got up an indecent rejoicing over his death. Josephus says, they "forgot the benefits he had conferred on them and acted the part of his bitterest enemies, for they cast such reproaches on him as are not fit to be mentioned" (*Ant.*, xix. xi. 1). These Greeks were, at any rate, not a baser set of men than the fifty Jews who went to Rome and heaped abuse on the king's grandfather shortly after his death,—abuse which the prejudiced historian heartily endorsed. The son of Herod Agrippa, commonly called Agrippa junior, a youth then being educated at Rome, was not as yet considered competent to succeed him, so that the government of Palestine, at a most critical period, again fell into the hands of Roman procurators. About four years afterwards Claudius made the young prince king of Chalcis, where he succeeded his uncle. The same emperor, in a little while, removed him from Chalcis, and gave him a portion of the dominion of his father and great-grandfather, that is, the province of Trachonitis; and, if peace could only have been maintained, he would, doubtless, in a few more years have governed the entire paternal kingdom. Indeed, he was already looked up to with respect as the head of the Jewish nation,

and even had committed to him the charge of the Temple and the appointment of the high-priests. But, under the rule of the procurators, the country seemed every year to get into a worse state of confusion, and drift nearer to a general war. Religious tumults frequently arose in Jerusalem, sanguinary quarrels broke out between the Jews and the other races of Palestine; the robbers grew more powerful and daring; and the better class of Jews, suffering from continual depredations and despairing of their country, emigrated in considerable numbers to Antioch, Greece, Egypt, and other Roman provinces, where they were more assured of enjoying the fruits of their industry in peace.

42. At this terrible revolutionary crisis, what a blessing to the inhabitants of Palestine would have been the return of Herod the Great—he who succeeded so well in reconciling the various races, suppressing the robbers, quelling the tumults, and maintaining friendly relations with imperial Rome! Even as it was, the sagacious old ruler seemed to speak to the infatuated people by the mouth of his great-grandson, who, if less able, adhered steadfastly to his policy, and inherited much of his wisdom and eloquence. It is to be regretted that this young Agrippa was not permitted to govern his father's kingdom, and concert measures with such good men as St. Paul and Gamaliel for a thorough reformation of the Temple services and the whole Judaic economy. Like the first Herod, he was, all along, the honest friend of the Jewish people, doing his utmost to reconcile them to the imperial connexion, and save them, even when they rebelled, from excessive punishment. Florus had severely coerced the seditious inhabitants of Jerusalem while Agrippa was absent at Alexandria. On the return of the latter to Judea, we are told that “the high-priests, the Sanhedrin, and other

influential Jews, went some distance to meet and congratulate the king, and inform him of the barbarous treatment which they had experienced from Florus. He was moved with indignation at this, yet he very adroitly transferred his anger to the Jews, whom he pitied at heart, hoping thus to moderate their spirit a little and divert them from thinking of revenge. And these men, more intelligent than the populace, and more desirous of peace on account of the possessions they had, were convinced that the king's reproof was meant for their good. Many of the populace, however, went to the distance of sixty furlongs to meet Agrippa, who was accompanied by the tribune Neapolitanus. The wives of those who had been slain also ran before them shrieking, and the whole multitude presently joined in their wail and entreated Agrippa to succour them. They, further, loudly detailed to Neapolitanus the miseries which they had endured under Florus; and, on entering the city, showed him the market-place desolated and the houses in ruins. They then, through Agrippa, prevailed on Neapolitanus to walk round the city, as far as Siloam, with a single attendant, and thus observe that the Jews were obedient to the Romans, with the exception of Florus, whom they abhorred on account of his barbarity" (War, II. xvi. 2).

43. Neapolitanus spoke kindly to the Jews, earnestly exhorted them to keep the peace, and, having participated, so far as a Gentile was permitted to do, in the Temple worship, went away to report the condition of the city to Cestius, the president of Syria. Meanwhile, the excited people were desirous of sending a deputation to Rome for the purpose of accusing Florus and obtaining his recall. Agrippa, accompanied by his sister Berenice, at length assembled the people in a large gallery, and, with tears in his eyes, delivered a noble oration to

them, hoping, at the eleventh hour, to prevent them from taking any further rash steps towards engaging in a ruinous war. It was exactly what the great Herod himself would have spoken in such circumstances—it was the last appeal of enlightened reason to mad Jerusalem. To give the substance of his discourse:—"Had I perceived," said Agrippa, "that you were all fully bent on going to war with the Romans, and that there were no sensible people among you inclined to peace, I should not have thought it worth while to stand here and give you advice, as it would only be speaking to no purpose. But, as some are eager for war, owing to their youth and inexperience of the misery which it brings, while others desire it from an unreasonable expectation that the nation will regain its independence, and another violent class hope to profit by things being thrown into confusion, I have thought it my duty to call you together and say what I can for your good, that those who incline to war may be better instructed, and not bring great harm on their wiser countrymen who prefer peace. . . . Your first reason for going to war is to redress the grievances which you have against the procurators. Now, you ought to conciliate as much as possible those in authority, and not rashly provoke them; for when you make great complaints of little offences, you excite those whom you accuse to be your enemies, and they will hurt you more than before. Nothing so much averts punishment as patient submission, and the quiet demeanour of those who are injured serves to appease and restrain their oppressors. But, granting that the Roman officers are severe beyond endurance, still all the Romans do not wrong you, and neither has Cæsar, yet it is against the whole of them that you would levy war. It is not by command that any officer comes to injure you, and those who are in the West



cannot always see what is done in the East, nor even obtain speedy intelligence. It is absurd to make war with a great many for the sake of one, and to fight with a mighty people for trivial reasons, even when they are not able to know exactly of what you complain. Moreover, the wrongs which we speak of may soon be corrected, for the same procurator will not remain here for ever, and others may act with more moderation. But war, if once begun, cannot be easily discontinued, nor carried on without many attendant calamities. Then, as to the desire of recovering your ancient independence, it is now unreasonable; you ought to have laboured earnestly not to lose it when Pompey came into the country . . . . Many nations stronger than you submit without murmuring to the Roman authority, and you are the only people in the world who think it degrading to do so. . . . You, probably, calculate on receiving divine assistance, but that is already on the side of the Romans, for such a vast empire as theirs could not have been consolidated without God's providence . . . . While the vessel is still in harbour it is well to foresee the coming storm, and not sail forth rashly into the midst of a hurricane . . . . The danger concerns not those who dwell here only, but those who reside in foreign cities; for Jews are dispersed everywhere, and if you go to war they will suffer from the retaliation of your enemies; and through the evil counsels of a few men, every city will be deluged with Jewish blood. . . . And now I call your sanctuary to witness, and the holy angels of God, and our common country, that I have not kept back anything that may help to save you, and if you will follow my advice we shall all enjoy peace, while, if you disregard me and are carried away by your passions, I shall not be responsible for your hurt" (War, II. xvi. 4).

44. The Jewish rulers, and all the more intelligent and thoughtful people, were convinced by this oration of Agrippa, and desirous to have peace. In compliance with his persuasions, they also set about to repair the ruins which had been made in the temple precincts, and collected tribute in the villages to the amount of forty talents to make up the sum which was due. But when he further entreated them to obey Florus till Cæsar should send another procurator, the ignorant and seditious multitude soon got the upper hand, and they insulted the man who would have saved them, and actually cast stones at him, and banished him by proclamation from the city. On this he directed the rulers, who were desirous to maintain order, to send a deputation to Florus at Cæsarea, while he himself retired to his loyal subjects in Trachonitis. Soon after, the fortress of Masada was taken from the Romans by treachery, and the seditious Jews, encouraged by this achievement, resolved to reject the customary sacrifice that was offered for Cæsar. The high-priests and rulers exhorted them not to take any such rash proceeding, but finding that their persuasions were all to no purpose, and fearing a general outbreak, they sent messengers both to Florus and to Agrippa requesting that an army should march to the city. Agrippa at once despatched from Trachonitis three thousand horsemen, and when these reached Jerusalem, the rulers, and all who were in favour of peace, took courage, and seizing on the upper city, held it with the aid of the king's soldiers against the seditious multitude. A fierce fight now went on for several days, and many were slain, but the soldiers were at length overpowered by their enemies and driven out of the upper city. "The insurgents then set fire to the house of Ananias, the high-priest, and to the palaces of Agrippa and Berenice. After this

they carried fire to the place where the archives were deposited, and burned the contracts belonging to their creditors, dissolving thereby the obligation which they were under to pay their debts. This was done in order to bring over to the insurrection the multitude of those who were debtors, and set the poor in opposition to the rich; and the keepers of the records, when they saw the destruction, fled away" (War, II. xvii. 6). Soon after, the high-priest Ananias was caught and slain; an assault was made on the city fortresses, and the king's soldiers, who took refuge there, presently agreed to a capitulation. The weak Roman garrison, which still held out under the command of Metilius, hoped to make the same terms, and offered to lay down their arms if only their lives should be spared. "The besiegers, complying with their petition, sent to them Gorion, the son of Nicodemus; Ananias, the son of Sadduk; and Judas, the son of Jonathan, that they might give them the security of their right hands and their oaths. Metilius, after this, brought down his soldiers, who, while they were in arms, were not interfered with, nor was there any appearance of treachery. But, when once they had laid down their shields and their swords, according to the articles of capitulation, and were going away under no suspicion of harm, Eleazer's men encompassed them about and slew them, while they neither defended themselves nor begged for mercy, but only cried out upon the breach of their articles and their oaths. And thus were all these men barbarously murdered, excepting Metilius, for, when he entreated for mercy and promised that he would turn Jew and be circumcised, they saved him alive, but none else. This loss to the Romans was not great, but still it appeared to be a prelude to the Jews' own destruction, and men publicly lamented when they

saw that war was now unavoidable" (War, II. xvii. 10).

45. It must be abundantly clear to all unprejudiced minds that the real oppressors of the Jews were neither Herod and his descendants nor the Romans, but their own lawless countrymen—the robbers and anarchists who terrorised over them and goaded them on to a calamitous war. Felix, Florus, and some of the other procurators, may have been occasionally too severe in repressing outbreaks; they met, however, with terrible provocation, and the weak, loyal population, who were far from blameless, would have suffered infinitely more had Cæsar given them independence and left them to take care of themselves. The Romans were needed in Palestine, not only for suppressing the disorderly bands which troubled the country, but for interposing and preventing the war of races which was ever liable to break out between Jews and Gentiles. It was one of the chief merits of Herod that he laboured very successfully for the reconciliation of his various subjects, and the removal of the race hatreds which had caused so much commotion and bloodshed since the time of the Maccabees. The procurators were less successful as mediators and appeasers of strife, and, when the insurrection occurred at Jerusalem, Florus, with the bulk of his army, was endeavouring to put down a sanguinary conflict which had broken out between the Jews and Greeks of Cæsarea. Josephus tells us that on the very day when the Roman soldiers were murdered at Jerusalem, "in one hour's time above twenty thousand Jews were killed, and all Cæsarea was emptied of its Jewish inhabitants." This statement is wholly incredible. The Jews were less numerous than the Greeks in Cæsarea, and, after much severe fighting and bloodshed, they were at length overpowered and driven



from the city. The subsequent proceedings prove that the war party at this time were really aiming at a general extirpation or expulsion of the Gentiles, as was contemplated in the time of the Maccabees. "Upon which stroke that the Jews received at Cæsarea, the whole nation was greatly enraged; so they divided themselves into several parties, and laid waste the villages of the Syrians and their neighbouring cities, Philadelphia, and Sebonites, and Gerasa, and Pella, and Scythopolis, and after them Gadara and Hippos. And invading Gaulonitis, some cities they destroyed there, and some they set on fire; then they went to Kedasa, belonging to the Tyrians and to Ptolemais, Gaba, and Cæsarea. Sebaste and Ascalon were not able to oppose their violence, and when they had burned down these they entirely demolished Anthedon and Gaza, and many of the neighbouring villages, and made an immense slaughter of those who were caught therein. However, the Syrians were even with the Jews in the multitude that they massacred, for they killed such as they caught in their cities, and that not only from the hatred they bore them, but through fear of suffering hurt from them. So the disorders throughout Syria were terrible, and every city was divided into two armies encamped one against the other, and the preservation of one party was in the other's destruction. The daytime was thus spent in the shedding of blood and the night in fear" (War, II. xviii. 1).

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## CHAPTER VI.

## HIS FAMILY TROUBLES.

1. The Jews a more inflexible race than the Idumeans.
3. Herod's Asmonean relatives make him unjust.
4. Alexandra intrigues to obtain for her son the high-priesthood.
7. Her plot to escape with him to Egypt discovered.
8. The drowning of Ari tobulus said to have been instigated by Herod.
15. He is summoned by Antony to Laodicea.
19. The accusations and squabbles that arise on his return.
21. Mariamne and Herod become mutually distrustful.
22. Alexandra draws Hyrcanus into a treasonable conspiracy.
23. He is convicted and slain.
26. Herod's conduct to his Asmonean relatives.
28. Their pride of birth.
29. Merivale's view of the relations of Herod and Mariamne.
31. Her behaviour and her treatment.
33. Her trial, condemnation, and death.
34. Herod's subsequent grief as regarded by Josephus, Dean Stanley, and others.
38. Execution of Alexandra, Costobarus, and the sons of Babas.
40. The sons of Mariamne return to Jerusalem and are incited to avenge her death.
42. The real authors of the strife.
46. Antipater brought back to court.
48. Augustus reconciles Herod and the sons of Mariamne.
49. Antipater and they are to reign in succession.
50. This arrangement unsatisfactory.
52. A civil war in the palace.
53. A second reconciliation.
54. Renewed dis-sensions.
55. The fabricated plot of Jucundus and Tyrannus.
58. The sons of Mariamne tried and condemned to death at Berytus.
59. Further dissensions respecting them and the verdict of Josephus.
61. The extent of Herod's culpability.
64. His orphan grand-children.
65. Parallel case of Peter the Great and his son Alexis.

**B**OTH as a husband and as a father Herod was naturally kind and indulgent, and had fortune placed him in a private position, apart from the strife of political factions, he would undoubtedly have been the head of a happy family. The chief

source of the domestic quarrels which embittered his later years was his unfortunate marriage with the princess Mariamne. Like Alexander the Great, he seems to have regarded marriage between hostile races and families as a powerful means of promoting their reconciliation, but in this particular instance such a favourable result was hardly to be expected. It has often been remarked, that society is based on mutual concession and mutual respect, that is, on a compromise of individual differences. When two persons meet on a narrow plank bridge, and each is willing to give way a little to the other, they will be able to pass in safety; but if neither will yield an inch to his neighbour, one or both will inevitably be plunged into the stream. The Jews were of all ancient races the most unbending, the most loth to adopt this great social principle of conceding something for the sake of harmony and peace. They were, consequently, bad rulers of others and bad subjects; and, when they intermarried with people of another race, the rabbis took care that there should be no equitable compromise or meeting of each other half-way; the Gentile was required to surrender everything for the sake of the alliance, and the Jew was to give up nothing. The Idumeans were a much less obstinate and unreasonable people, for they were generally prepared to make little politic concessions to their neighbours in order to get on agreeably with them, and always knew how to yield with a good grace to superior force. When John Hyrcanus conquered Idumea, the inhabitants were required to submit to humiliating terms; and, had they been of the fanatical Jewish spirit, rather than accept the foreign customs that were forced upon them, they would, one and all, have laid down their lives. But with them better counsels prevailed; they consented to adopt the rite of circumcision, and

other regulations of the Jewish law, and acknowledge the authority of the Jewish king, and at the price of this concession were permitted to retain undisturbed possession of their territory. The ancestors of Herod seem to have taken an active and leading part in persuading their countrymen to submit patiently to Jewish domination, and through their accommodating spirit they obtained high office under the Asmonean kings in helping them to govern their new dependency. Antipater, by reason of his military talents, became, at length, not only the first Idumean, but the foremost man in Judea next to the king or ethnarch, while his son Herod rose to a position of still greater power and importance.

2. When Herod, as the trusted general of Hyrcanus, saved his master's throne by defeating his rival Antigonus and driving him out of Palestine, it is not surprising that the king should offer him as a reward the hand of his grand-daughter, the child-princess Mariamne. Many a successful general has been rewarded in a similar way by his sovereign; and in this case the alliance might have turned out advantageous to both parties, if only Hyrcanus had continued undisturbed in the possession of the Government. At the time of the espousal Herod must have known that his future wife would be likely to inherit all the pride and the prejudice of the Asmonean family, and expect in everything to have her own way. But he might naturally feel that, as a general, he could afford to humour the fair princess to any extent since it was not then to be supposed that she would ever concern herself with other than purely domestic affairs. When, however, a great revolution swept over the country, and he was eventually made king by the Romans—to the neglect of her own family's hereditary claims—all the circumstances of the case were



altered, and there was a prospect that she, with mischievous people behind her, would dangerously interfere with his government. She had a younger brother, Aristobulus, who was regarded with great hope by the Jewish Nationalists as being the undoubted heir to the Asmonean crown. Her widowed mother, Alexandra, daughter of Hyrcanus, was also a scheming ambitious woman, who evidently regarded Herod as only a convenient stop-gap, and shared the popular wish that young Aristobulus should be the future king of the Jews. Hyrcanus had been carried off by the Parthians; and, if Alexandra and Aristobulus had now been taken away by the Romans and detained in safe custody, Herod would have had a great source of trouble removed from his path, and might possibly have succeeded in contenting his wife Mariamne. But she, with her intriguing relatives at her back, and behind them the Nationalist party, was determined to rule him, and make him study on every occasion the glory of her proud revengeful family, rather than the welfare of the various races of Palestine.

3. Herod was disposed to act justly towards all his subjects, and treat fairly the various members of his household, but in trying to conciliate his royal Asmonean relatives, he was induced at length to perpetrate against others very gross injustice. In one of the reasonable and equitable portions of the Jewish law it is written, "If a man have two wives, one beloved and the other hated, and they have borne him children, and the first-born is her's that is hated, then it shall be when he maketh his sons to inherit what he hath, he may not place first the son of the beloved, but the son of the hated, by reason of his being the first born" (Deut. xxi. 15, 16). When Herod consummated his marriage with Mariamne, he very wrongfully disinherited his first-born, Antipater, and put in his place a younger son,

Alexander, who was born of the wife that was most beloved. The Jewish people, and the priesthood, could not see that he had acted unfairly in this matter, because they were accustomed to confound favour with justice; they thought that nothing was wrong which tended to the honour and exaltation of their race. Then the Asmoneans seemed to flatter themselves that they had in the government of the country an inalienable estate, when in reality it had been forfeited by their rebellion and incapacity; for the Roman right to dominate Palestine was, to say the least, as well founded as the Jewish right to dominate Idumea. Herod, and his father and grandfather before him, had always been true and loyal to the ruling family of Judea; and, now that their positions were unexpectedly reversed, he was justly entitled to claim the same loyalty from them. They could not however be got to see things in this light, and were able to do him mischief with their pretensions; and, being now their relative, he was desirous, if possible, to conciliate them and purchase their goodwill. By sacrificing the rights of his eldest son, Antipater, and making the children of Mariamne his heirs, he consented to the Asmonean blood sharing with his own blood in the nation's future government; he met his Jewish relatives half-way, as it were, even when he had no need or right to do so, and thus hoped at any rate to afford them satisfaction and have domestic peace.

4. "Bend, rather than break," would have been a very suitable motto for Herod's family; on the other hand, that of the unyielding Asmoneans should have been "Break, rather than bend." They could not be got to understand a compromise, or induced to make a reasonable and cheerful concession to any superior power, even for the saving of their lives. Alexandra, after her husband had been executed as an obstinate and thrice-defeated

enemy of the Romans, ought to have been exceedingly thankful that she and her children were still spared and even permitted, through Herod's relationship, to share in the government of the country. But not content with the sacrifice of Antipater which he had made in their favour, she was determined as soon as possible, with the aid of the Nationalist party, to wrest all authority from his hands. She commenced to plot for a complete restoration of the Asmonean dynasty, by entreating him to confer on her youthful son Aristobulus the high-priesthood. This scandalous petition could not possibly be granted with any sense of justice. For, in the first place, the high-priesthood was a permanent office, and Ananel, who now held it, was an honourable man, who had done nothing whatever to deserve dismissal. Then, even if he had died or been justly deposed, Aristobulus, a youth of little over sixteen, was totally unfitted to succeed to his duty, which required for its decent performance an amount of learning, gravity, and sage experience, such as we are accustomed to look for in an archbishop. And had the youth been of fit age and full discretion to undertake the office, it would at once resume with him its old hereditary character, and might soon come to be fought for again by rival claimants, and held by red-handed murderers, such as were some of his ancestors. Herod therefore very properly refused the unreasonable request, and so gave much offence both to his wife Mariamne and her mother, as though he had treated the Asmonean family with indignity. The intriguing Alexandra next wrote to Cleopatra, a woman in some respects more wicked and mischievous than herself, and desired her to intercede with Antony in order to obtain for Aristobulus the high-priesthood. Antony was too much under the influence of the infamous Egyptian queen, but he did not choose to

be ruled by her on this occasion, because he esteemed Herod as his friend, and would not without good reason interfere with the order of his government.

5. As Antony seemed indisposed to further her crooked purposes, Alexandra thought he would be more likely to confer the favour which she required if her son could only be got away to the Egyptian court. She entertained a very high opinion of the beauty of her children; and, at the solicitation of one Dellius, an artful minister of vice who had aided Cleopatra in captivating Antony, had their portraits taken and sent to the voluptuous triumvir in the hope that he would so be greatly influenced by their personal attractions. Whatever the designs of Dellius may have been, it is not likely that Alexandra contemplated making an immoral bargain, or involving her children in any flagrant transgression of the Jewish law, although in other respects she was capable of going to great lengths of wickedness for the attainment of her ends. At this period, she could hardly have had any thought of encouraging Antony to supplant Herod in his wife's affections, as the narrative suggests; but she undoubtedly persuaded Antony by letter to ask Herod's permission for young Aristobulus to visit Egypt. Herod received a letter from Antony to this effect, and "wrote back to him saying that, if this youth should only leave the country, all would be in a state of confusion, because the Jews were hoping for a change of government, and to have in his place another king. When he had thus excused himself to Antony, he resolved to withhold his permission to the youth, who would thus be secured from dishonourable treatment. But his wife Mariamne was continually urging him to bestow the high-priesthood on her brother, and he at length deemed it expedient to do so, because, if



he once had that dignity, he could not go out of the country. So he called together his friends, and told them that Alexandra privately conspired against his royal authority, and endeavoured, by means of Cleopatra and Antony, to deprive him of the government, and put this youth in his place. He declared that this intriguing was unjust, and that, if she upset him, she would also cause Mariamne to lose her present dignity, and bring further troubles on the kingdom which he had acquired by great labour and pains. He further said that, while he well knew her wicked designs, he would not himself requite her with evil, but would even now give the youth the high-priesthood" (Ant., xv., ii. 6, 7).

6. Thus, as Antony was made unjust on several occasions by a wicked mistress, Herod, much against his better inclination, was driven to perpetrate one wrong after another by a mischievous mother-in-law. To content this ambitious woman, he had divorced his first wife, Doris, and driven from home his eldest son, Antipater, and he now deposed from the high-priesthood Ananel, his good and faithful friend. No king was more desirous to rule his subjects with even-handed justice; but Alexandra was determined that there should be favour, respect of persons, the Jew before the Gentile, and the Asmonean before all other Jews. What made it still worse for Herod, the population of Jerusalem, ever disaffected and ready for change, took the same prejudiced view; they sympathised, not with him, but with Alexandra. There was no righteous cry of indignation at Ananel being turned out of the office which he had honourably filled for no other reason than to make room for this young, incompetent scion of royalty. On the contrary, great joy was manifested at the gross piece of partiality. When the youth, not yet seventeen, went to the altar to officiate as high-priest, "a warm

zeal and affection towards him were exhibited among the people, and they called to remembrance the acts of his grandfather, Aristobulus, and mingled their good wishes towards him with joyful acclamations" (Ant., xv. iii. 3). The grandfather, Aristobulus, and his two sons, had engaged in usurpation, aggression, rebellion, and brought on Judea immense evils; to gratify their ambition, they had involved the country in a succession of civil wars, and, while rushing madly on destruction with many of their countrymen, had bequeathed nothing but ruin and impoverishment to posterity. Herod was now doing his utmost, by a wise and generous rule, to repair the immense mischief which they had wrought; he was exerting himself to maintain peace, encourage industry, and restore the country which had been so much afflicted by war to a prosperous condition. Yet the infatuated people of Jerusalem, so far from seconding these well-directed efforts, were obstinately bent on reversing his policy, and committing themselves with their accustomed rashness, to another round of rebellious struggles and disasters under the lead of the Asmoneans. He saw plainly the tendency of things, and knew well that if Alexandra were let alone at the head of the Nationalist faction, she would do all in her power to cause a new revolution, and wrest the government out of his hands. While, therefore, he endeavoured to conciliate her in some matters, and especially by conferring on Aristobulus the high-priesthood, he resolved to watch her closely, and take whatever precautionary measures seemed necessary to thwart her ulterior designs.

7. Josephus says, in reference to the contention between the king and his scheming mother-in-law: "And now Herod seemed to have healed the divisions in his family; yet, as it often happens when people appear reconciled to one another, he

still continued to have some distrust; for he thought that, as Alexandra had already made attempts to upset his government, she would probably do so again if a fit opportunity occurred. He therefore gave express orders that she should confine herself to the palace, and not meddle with public affairs. The palace guards also kept her under such strict observation, that nothing which she did from day to day in her private life was entirely concealed. All this supervision and restraint put her out of temper very much, for she was a proud woman, and felt indignant against Herod that, under the notion of having a guard of honour about her, she should be kept in such restraint as not to be able to speak and act freely. She therefore wrote to Cleopatra, and made a long complaint about these unpleasant restrictions, and solicited her counsel and aid. Cleopatra, in answer to this petition, advised her to take Aristobulus and come away immediately to Egypt. The advice pleased her, and she at once formed this contrivance for getting away: she procured two coffins, made as if they were to carry away two dead bodies, and, putting her son into one and herself into the other, gave orders to such of the servants as were in the secret to carry them away in the night-time. Their path was to be from Jerusalem westward to the sea-coast, where a ship would be in readiness to convey them to Egypt. It so happened, however, that her servant *Æsop* fell in with *Sabion*, one of her friends, and mentioned the matter to him, supposing that he knew of it already. *Sabion* had formerly been an enemy of Herod, and was even suspected of being one of those who contrived the murder of his father, *Antipater*; but as he was now desirous of effecting a reconciliation with the king, he went to him straightway and betrayed Alexandra's stratagem. Herod determined to let

her proceed in the execution of her treacherous design, and presently caught her in the very fact. But, though he had a great mind to punish her, he overlooked the offence; for believing that his enemy, Cleopatra, would not suffer her to be arraigned, he made a show of magnanimity and forgiveness. However, he fully proposed to himself to put Aristobulus out of the way by one means or another; yet he thought that if he deferred it for a little while, he would probably better avert suspicion" (Ant., xv. iii. 2).

8. As to what Herod really thought and proposed to himself on this occasion, we know nothing at all, and are here simply told what Josephus and other prejudiced Jews imagined that he thought. Cleopatra was well known to be his mortal enemy; she had long been using every art to deprive him of his government in the hope of converting Judea into an Egyptian province; and Alexandra, in scheming to advance the fortunes of her son, only became the tool of this greater schemer, who cared neither for the son nor the son-in-law, and was only eager to snatch from both disputants the territorial prize. In plotting to get away surreptitiously to a foreign country and concert measures with the king's enemy, both she and Aristobulus rendered themselves guilty of treason, and had they, while feigning death, been captured in their coffins and actually entombed or submerged, their punishment would not have been wholly undeserved, nor one that could have called forth much commiseration. The fact that Herod did not seize this opportunity to get rid of his troublesome relatives, when they were well caught in their treachery, and might have been slain with some show of justice, affords strong grounds for believing that he did not really desire their death, and hoped by generous treatment to reconcile them to his



government. It is certain that he made matters up with them by some means or other, as a discreet ruler in his position would naturally be disposed to do, and they associated again on amicable terms. Not very long after, however, Aristobulus was drowned while bathing with other young men in a fish-pool near the palace of Jericho, and Herod was at once suspected and accused of contriving this fatality. It was inevitable that the king should find himself under such a cloud, but when we come to consider the whole case, and the absence of any clear, positive evidence in support of the charge, there is far more reason to believe that his enemies on this occasion were guilty of their ordinary calumny than that he committed an extraordinary crime.

9. The story of the drowning, which Josephus tells in his book of the "War," is this: "When Herod had given Aristobulus the high-priesthood in his seventeenth year, he slew him shortly after conferring on him that favour; for when the youth put on the holy vestments and approached the altar at a festival, the multitude, in admiration of him, was moved to tears. Whereupon he was sent by night to Jericho, and was there, at Herod's command, dipped by the Gauls in a pool till he was drowned" (War, I. xxii. 2). It is thus briefly represented as a deliberate act of murder provoked only by jealousy of Aristobulus, for not a word is said of his having attempted to get away with his mother to Cleopatra. In the "Antiquities" we are told of this plot and its failure, and of Aristobulus appearing for the first time to officiate at the Feast of Tabernacles. The historian proceeds to say, "When, therefore, the festival was over, and the king was feasting at Jericho with Alexandra, who entertained him there, he was very pleasant with the young man, and drew him into a lonely place, and played

with him in a youthful manner. As it happened to be very sultry, some of the attendants went to bathe in the neighbouring fish-ponds. Aristobulus at first looked on at them, but after a while, at the instigation of Herod, he also went into the water. Then, such of Herod's men as had been appointed for the purpose, dipped him as he was swimming, and plunged him under water in the dark of the evening, as if they were only in sport, nor did they desist till he was quite drowned" (Ant., xv. iii. 3).

10. In the first account Josephus tells us that the youth was "sent by night to Jericho," making it appear that he was pounced upon in the night time, conveyed away there secretly, and murdered. But, according to the second story, Aristobulus, on a hot day, presented himself at the palace of Jericho, in company with Herod, as his mother's guest. Then, while suffering from the heat, he very naturally went to bathe with other young men, and his going into the fish-pool to refresh himself might have been just as much a spontaneous act as his journey to Jericho. Thousands of young gentlemen have lost their lives accidentally while bathing in company with others, and no positive proof has ever been furnished that this was not the fate of Aristobulus. "Such of Herod's men as had been appointed for the purpose dipped him as he was swimming." Is this strong assertion a mere conjecture on the part of the writer and others, or derived from testimony which was brought out before a judicial inquiry? In the latter case the Gauls, the trusted guards of Herod, must have come forward and betrayed his crime, saying, "Such of our company were directed by the king to drown Aristobulus." A betrayal of this kind would have made a great sensation throughout the country, and some interesting particulars respecting it could scarcely fail to have been handed down in history. But as there is no

intimation of the king being regularly incriminated in this way by the testimony of his own men, the whole case against him clearly rests on conjecture. Those who hated him intensely would hear him give the murderous command, and would see him stand by the pool, and look on with malignant pleasure while the poor youth was submerged, but it would only be in their own imagination.

11. Young princes are liable to lose their lives in various ways as well as other people, but there was no possible way in which Aristobulus could have died at that time without the suspicions of the Nationalist party being directed against Herod. Had he accidentally fallen over a precipice and perished, rumour would at once have said that he was treacherously lured to the spot and pushed over by a servant of the king. If he had been waylaid in some lonely walk and slain by a band of robbers, a story would have gone forth that the robbers were hired to perpetrate the foul deed. And even if he had died on his bed from an ordinary malady, there were many who would have speedily whispered it about that he was poisoned, just as they did in the case of Pheroras (War, i. xxix. 4). Moreover, those who were not strongly prejudiced against Herod might, under all the circumstances, very naturally suspect him of having instigated the removal of the prince; for Aristobulus was looked upon as a rival who might possibly supplant him, and rival princes had been often enough murdered before in Judea. The first prince bearing the name of Aristobulus put to death his own brother (Ant., XIII. xi. 2). And not only Jews, but Gentiles of that period were quite accustomed to the violent removal of redundant royal personages. We need not wonder that Herod's unscrupulous enemy, Cleopatra, should believe in his guilt, and make a loud and persistent

clamour about it, since she had "poisoned her brother when only fifteen years old, to prevent him becoming king of Egypt, and she got her sister Arsinoë slain" (xv. iv. 1). And her own son, Cæsarion, was eventually put to death at the instigation of Augustus, not because he had done any great wrong, but because it was thought probable that by reason of his high birth, he would soon be surrounded by disaffected people and used as a powerful instrument for raising another civil war. It was inevitable, therefore, in that age that suspicion should be generally directed against Herod in respect to the death of his young relative, whether he was really guilty of causing the fatality at Jericho or perfectly innocent.

12. It must be observed that in rude times every father was supposed to be entitled to punish an offending son severely, even to the extent of putting him to death. According to the Jewish law, a stubborn and rebellious son considered worthy of death had to be brought forth and stoned by the congregation (Deut. xxi. 18-20), but at that period a man would not have been thought criminal if he slew an incorrigible youth of his begetting with his own hand. The despotic power of inflicting capital punishment which a father had as the head of a family could be generally exercised by the chief of a tribe. At the present day an African chief will occasionally hurl an assegai with fatal effect at one of his offending people without incurring thereby any reproach from the rest. Powerful despotic princes have struck down one or more of their recalcitrant subjects with just as little fear of being called to account for their violence. When Alexander slew Clitus, those who witnessed the sanguinary deed did not consider their sovereign a murderer, but rather a supreme judge and executioner. But there were not many great rulers in an equally strong



position, and able to inflict in the same open way arbitrary punishment. A king generally had a more or less numerous party disaffected towards him, and if he had ventured to put to death its most obnoxious members there would have been instantly raised against him a loud cry of resentment. It was therefore not unfrequent for a despotic monarch in such circumstances to get a rival or a formidable opponent slain secretly by the hand of a deputy in order to divert suspicion and obloquy from himself. Rulers were in a position that enabled them to murder and disguise their guilt better than other people could do, and as it was well known that the more unscrupulous among them hushed up crimes to some extent, others were liable to be suspected occasionally when they were guiltless.

13. If Herod had instigated the drowning of Aristobulus, he would have been less criminal than many other rulers of that period. But it must be borne in mind that those who removed rivals from their path by unscrupulous means, were either usurpers, urged on by a strong party behind them to capture a throne, or sovereigns holding an independent position and pressed to resort to violence for their own security. And Herod, as a tributary king, placed in authority by the Romans, could have had no corresponding inducement to set himself above law and seek to rid himself of rivals by criminality. Such an act, too, would have been wholly inconsistent with his character; for he was not accustomed at any period to strike his foes treacherously, but to proceed against them openly before all the world. Secret poisoning was common enough at that time; his own father was taken off by it, and he was himself in great apprehension of falling by the same cowardly weapon, but he never once attempted to turn it against others. Nor was he, like many irresponsible despots, accustomed to

put dangerous people to death without their being convicted of any special offence. The man Sabion, who betrayed Alexandra's plot, had for some years been looked upon as his deadly foe, and there were many members of the Nationalist party breathing against him the fiercest enmity, yet so long as they abstained from hostile action, he permitted them to live unmolested. There was no reason why he should show less magnanimity to his young relative, Aristobulus. The Romans were not all corrupted by Cleopatra, as Antony was, and they were not likely to stand by coolly and see their friend Herod overthrown by a youthful representative of the Nationalist party, whose father and grandfather had been their inveterate enemies. However popular Aristobulus might be at Jerusalem, he was a mere lad, without military experience, and had no power to give further trouble to the government than by heading a temporary revolt. It was, therefore, obviously Herod's wisest course to treat him kindly as a brother, and at the same time keep a watch on his movements, and suffer him, if so disposed, to go to the length of commencing an insurrection, while making himself every requisite preparation to suppress it sharply by superior force. This is the course that a brave, sagacious soldier would have taken, and any king, acting in such a totally opposite spirit as to entice the poor youth to a secluded spot and there appoint guards to fall upon him, in feigned play, and cruelly submerge him, must have been at once a most despicable coward and a blundering fool.

14. But though it is difficult to believe that a ruler like Herod, open and above-board in all his acts, could stoop to such baseness as to instigate the drowning of Aristobulus, a secret murder of that kind might not appear either wrong or impolitic to his less intelligent dependents. The young

Asmonean prince, the hope of the Nationalist party, was growing up as a sort of rival to the king, and had recently, by acting in concert with his intriguing mother, been causing considerable annoyance. All this was well known and much talked about in Jerusalem, and some of Herod's rough partisans might very naturally believe that they should be doing him a good service by despatching his rival when they met with a favourable opportunity. If the drowning at Jericho was not a pure accident, it is quite possible that the youthful high-priest suffered under the hands of mistaken loyalists in much the same way that our own high-priest, Thomas à Becket, perished in Canterbury Cathedral. Some of Herod's ignorant and over-zealous guards, while bathing sportively in the fish-pool at the dusk of evening, and finding this obnoxious arch-priest in their company, would have been likely enough to submerge him without any prompting, and without any far-sighted consideration of what would be the effect on the popular mind. And on finding himself suspected of complicity, the course which the king thenceforth took in making a grand mourning for Aristobulus to appease the excited feelings of the people, was not much unlike that of our Henry II. in proceeding, under similar circumstances, with great humility, on the Canterbury pilgrimage.

15. Josephus says, in reference to the funeral preparations for the young prince, "None of these marks of respect could overcome Alexandra's grief, but the remembrance of his miserable death made her sorrow both deep and permanent. She wrote an account of this treacherous affair to Cleopatra and told how her son had been murdered. Cleopatra, who had formerly been desirous to assist her, now pitied her greatly in the loss of Aristobulus, and made the case her own. She earnestly entreated

Antony to punish the perpetrator of this murder, since it was a shameful thing that Herod, to whom a kingdom was given which belonged to others, should be guilty of such horrid crimes against those who were really of royal blood. Antony listened to her persuasions, and, when he came to Laodicea, sent and directed Herod to meet him there and answer to the charge about the drowning of Aristobulus, for it was very wrong if he had any hand in such a treacherous deed. Herod was now in fear both of the accusation and of Cleopatra's enmity, since she was always endeavouring to set Antony against him. Being compelled to obey the summons, he left the government in the hands of his brother-in-law, and gave him a private charge that, if Antony should kill him, he also should immediately kill Mariamne, since he regarded his wife with tender affection, and was afraid that after his death she, for her beauty, should be engaged to some other man. His intimation, however, at the bottom was this, that Antony had fallen in love with her when he had formerly heard of her beauty. So when he had given Joseph this charge, and had no sure hope of escaping death, he went away to Antony. But as Joseph was administering the public affairs of the kingdom, and on that account was frequently with Mariamne, both from business matters and also from homage due to the queen, he often spoke of Herod's strong affection for her. And when the women, especially Alexandra, used to turn his discourses into raillery, Joseph was so anxious to demonstrate the king's love, that he went so far as to mention the charge he had received, in order to show that Herod could neither live without her nor bear a separation from her even after he was dead. But the women naturally enough did not consider this to have been an instance of Herod's strong affection for them, but rather



deemed it hard usage that he should order them to be tyrannically put to death even after he was himself dead. And this information which they received caused them afterwards to regard him with distrust" (Ant. xv. iii. 5-6).

16. From what source did Josephus obtain this improbable conversation which is said to have taken place between Herod's relatives during his absence at Laodicea? It could only have originated in the imagination of some Jewish fabulist. Herod's wife and mother-in-law had got up a charge of murder against him, and had sent him to answer to the charge before Antony—sent him, as they thought, to certain death. Is it likely that under these circumstances he could have entertained the slightest affection for either of them, any more indeed than they had for him? And is it, then, reasonable to suppose that his lieutenant, Joseph, knowing well the position of affairs and the terrible estrangement between the parties, would have prated to the women at such a time of the king's wonderful affection and regard? Even if Herod was expecting to lose his life through some other charge of which his relatives were innocent, and nothing had occurred to interrupt in any way his conjugal love, he would have been very unlikely to bid Joseph slay his beautiful wife in order that no one else should have her, and believe that such a command would be obeyed. Men consumed with jealousy have often enough killed with their own hands women whom they have passionately loved to prevent them from being espoused by others, but they are never seen to blunder so ridiculously as to think of perpetrating such crimes by deputy. Yet we are told that Herod, not content with once giving an absurd charge to that effect, and suffering in consequence bitter vexation at his betrayal, repeated it to another man on the very next occasion that offered, and

with precisely the same results (Ant., xv. vii. 1). We are further informed that on this second instance the king was also afflicted with a most extraordinary fit of envy. "In case he should be put to death by Cæsar, his envy prompted him to slay Hyrcanus, who would otherwise become his successor" (xv. vi. 1). But we learn in another portion of the narrative that he had other and better reasons for slaying Hyrcanus, and was not in the least moved to it by an unnatural envy of one who might possibly reign after his death. So, if it is to be accepted as a fact that he actually directed one of his relatives to slay Mariamne in the event of Antony putting him to death, we may be quite sure that he had no affection for her at the time, and in giving the command was not influenced at all by an extravagant jealousy, but by a more natural feeling of revenge. The narrative implies that the women had both been condemned to suffer if the king suffered, and it is clear that he could have had at no time any jealousy in respect to Alexandra.

17. On being summoned to Laodicea, Herod at once prepared to obey the command of his superior, but, notwithstanding their past friendship, he was by no means certain of receiving from Antony strict justice. He knew well that Cleopatra, who had murdered her own kindred and several others who stood in the way of her ambition, was not in the least concerned about the death of Aristobulus, but simply wanted a good plea for effecting his own riddance with the view to annexing his dominions. He knew, too—according to report—that Alexandra had been directing Mariamne's attention towards Antony, and that some time before the portrait had been sent to the great triumvir, in the hope that he would be taken with her beauty. It was also notorious that Antony, although a just man if left to himself, was wonderfully susceptible to the

allurements of women, and was liable by their persistent entreaties to be turned far out of the path of rectitude. Under these circumstances, he could not help suspecting that, while Cleopatra had long been seeking for an opportunity to appropriate his kingdom, Antony was now equally desirous to get possession of his wife (War, i. xxii. 3). If so, it was only necessary that the triumvir should charge him with murder at Laodicea, and order his execution, and the designs of both parties would be speedily accomplished. It was desirable, therefore, at this juncture that he should put his affairs in order and prepare for the worst. As Antony was being pushed on against him not only by Cleopatra, but by Alexandra and Mariamne, his blood, if he should fall, would rest in part on those two contumacious members of his household, and on them, at least, it would be possible to have his death avenged. And we know from his own conduct after his father was poisoned, and after his brother Joseph was slain, that he would be a very likely man when going to risk his life to say to his brother-in-law, "If I fall, be sure to avenge me." Moreover by placing the two women under the care of his male relative, so that they should be treated as hostages for his safe return, it would give him some advantage before Antony in the event of his worst suspicions being confirmed; for the triumvir would not be likely to put him to death with the view to get possession of Mariamne, if he knew of it being arranged that she should perish at the same time so that he would fail after all to obtain the coveted prize.

18. When Herod left his palace and the government of Jerusalem in the hands of Joseph, the husband of Salome, and set out to meet Antony at Laodicea, some anxiety as to the result of his journey was very naturally felt both by his friends and by his foes. An excitable and prejudiced mul-

titude are wonderfully quick in circulating any story derogatory to people if they heartily wish it to be true. No sooner was Aristobulus drowned at Jericho, than the opinion thrown out by one and another as to Herod being the occasion of it was spread over the country in every direction like wildfire. And now another story was disseminated about the king which obtained just as ready credence, both among the populace and on the part of Alexandra and Mariamne, but, happily, in this instance, he was soon able to convince them of its falsehood. "A report went about Jerusalem among Herod's enemies that Antony had tortured him and put him to death. This report naturally produced great excitement at the palace, especially among the women. Alexandra tried to persuade Joseph to leave the palace and fly with them to the ensigns of the Roman legion, which then lay encamped near the city, under the command of Julius. She thought, in the event of a disturbance arising in the city, they should thus be in greater security from having the favour and protection of the Romans. Besides, if Antony did but once see Mariamne, they hoped by his means to recover the kingdom and obtain the highest authority because of their royal extraction" (Ant., xv. iii. 7).

19. While the women were thus in high spirits, making sure of Herod's death, and arranging how they might thereupon have a speedy interview with his slayer and get entire possession of the government, their calculations were suddenly upset by letters arriving from the king announcing "that he still found Antony just to him, and was no longer under any apprehension of receiving hard treatment, and how he would soon return and resume the government with a firmer assurance of his friendship than ever; for he should not in future be likely to suffer from Cleopatra's covetous-



ness, since Antony had given her Celesyria, and so pacified her and put an end to her constant entreaties for the possession of Judea. When these letters were brought, the women no longer spoke of flying to the Romans, as they had contemplated doing while Herod was supposed to be dead. Yet was that design of theirs no secret, and when the king had conducted Antony on his way against the Parthians and returned to Judea, both his sister and mother informed him of Alexandra's intentions. Salome added further against Joseph, although it was only a calumny, that he had often had criminal intercourse with Mariamne. She said this through her enmity, for when differences arose between them, Mariamne took great liberties, and reproached the others with the meanness of their birth. Then Herod, though much attached to Mariamne, was presently disturbed at this and tormented with jealousy. He therefore questioned her privately about this matter of Joseph, but she denied it on her oath, and said in her defence all that could be said by an innocent woman. The king was thus prevailed upon, by degrees, to drop the suspicion, and being overcome by affection for his wife, he demonstrated his feelings strongly and apologised for having seemed to regard her with distrust. Then, as is usual between lovers, they both fell into tears and embraced each other with a most tender affection. But as the king gave more assurances of his belief in her fidelity, and endeavoured to draw from her a like expression of confidence, she said, 'Yet was your command, that if any harm came to you from Antony, I, who had been no occasion of it, should perish with you, a sign of your love for me?' When these words had fallen from her lips, he was much shocked and let her go from his arms, and tore his hair, and cried out that now he had clear proof that Joseph had

been criminally intimate with her, or he would never have disclosed the command which had been given him in confidence. And while he was in this fury he was near upon killing his wife, but, being still overcome by his love for her, he restrained his anger, although not without a lasting grief and trouble of mind. However, he gave order that Joseph should be slain, without permitting him to come into his presence; and as for Alexandra, he bound her and kept her in custody as the cause of all this mischief" (Ant., xv. iii. 9).

20. We are, again, curious to know from what source Josephus derived his information. He says that Nicolaus, of Damascus, "told falsehoods about the incontinence of Mariamne" (Ant., xvi., vii. 1), and was no more of a trustworthy historian in what he wrote of her than in his account of what Herod did at David's sepulchre. But it seems as if Josephus, in the above narrative, had rejected the version of Nicolaus to follow some authority still less entitled to credit, unless he has ventured here, as in some other parts of his writings, to conjure up scenes entirely from his own imagination. It is quite probable that Mariamne was falsely accused of adultery during her husband's absence at Laodicea. Although she was anything but a good faithful wife to him, and evidently wanted him dead, we are strongly disposed to believe that she was not incontinent. But then it was a common practice of the Jews to oppose fiction by fiction—that is, to refute a lie, where good evidence was not forthcoming for that purpose, by inventing a contradictory lie. And this seems to have been exactly what was done by some of her sympathising countrymen to clear the reputation of Mariamne. It is not at all likely that any little chamber quarrel that took place between the king and his refractory spouse would be distinctly overheard and accurately

reported. We have, at any rate, very strong reasons for believing that the private scene in the palace described by Josephus is purely mythical, because it does not accord with admitted facts, or, rather, is not in harmony with the more credible portions of the narrative. The writer seems to be just as much an inventor of imaginary conversations as Fenton, Pordage, Voltaire, and others, who in modern times have constructed dramas of "*Herod and Mariamne*." When Herod returned safe from Laodicea, to the surprise and disappointment of his wife and mother-in-law, Mariamne could hardly have ventured to reproach him for being wanting in love towards her, or for desiring her to be slain in the event of his falling; and if she had done so, he would probably have turned the tables on her in this fashion,—“You have had a larger share of love than all the rest of my wives and have returned me less than either; nay, have requited me with insolence, hatred and distrust, and ranged yourself on the side of my enemies. Your mother has long been collegued with Cleopatra to work my ruin, and you have gone heartily with your mother, both in accusing me unjustly of murder and in sending me to Antony that he might condemn me to death. When the false news that I had been tortured and slain was circulated through Jerusalem, you evidently rejoiced, and prepared to go forth in the most fascinating manner to win the favour of Antony. Had I actually suffered, you would have been in part guilty of causing my death, and those who undertook to slay you and Alexandra by way of retribution would have done nothing wrong.”

21. As to Mariamne's alleged criminal intimacy with Joseph, there seems to have been nothing to show for it but suspicion, and we may fairly consider her innocent of the charge. But, seeing how ready she was to indulge in unreasonable suspicions of

her husband's guilt, and accept any idle story of his enemies rather than take his own word, can we feel surprised that the distrust should come home to her, and that she should find herself in turn suspected? Even if not incontinent, she was far from being a faithful, devoted wife, and, considering how she treated her husband's relatives, how she behaved in expectation of his death, and that she was all along acting in concert with the great harlot, Cleopatra, she furnished no little ground for suspicion. Many a weak woman has been, under strong temptation, seduced from virtue, has made in a moment of folly an unpremeditated breach of conjugal chastity, and yet has been more true to her marriage obligations than this Mariamne who coolly conspired against her husband's life. If Joseph, who was left in charge of the palace, had been a firm, upright man, he would have felt scandalised at the conduct of Alexandra and Mariamne, and would have treated them coldly and had as little communion with them as possible. They, naturally enough, wanted to gain his friendship and bring him over to their interests, and he seems to have been sufficiently weak-minded or false to his trust to reciprocate their blandishments, probably expecting, as they did, that Herod would never return to resume the government, and thinking it politic to make good terms with his successors. When Herod's mother and sister saw the unseemly familiarity that had sprung up between Mariamne and Joseph, they perhaps reproached him about it, so that a quarrel arose between them, and they were led to suspect, at length, that he was criminally intimate with the queen, who so hated and despised them as being of inferior blood. But Joseph was probably condemned to death from being found unfaithful to his trust in other important matters, and with the very little information afforded us, it



is impossible to say anything in regard to the justice of the punishment. The statement that Herod gave order for his relative to be slain without a trial, "without permitting him to come into his sight," is wholly incredible. In another place the prejudiced historian even goes so far as to say that Mariamne, as well as Joseph, was instantly put to death; "whereupon, out of his ungovernable jealousy and rage, he commanded both of them to be slain immediately" (War, i. xxii. 5).

22. We are told that Herod bound and imprisoned Alexandra, "as the cause of all this mischief." This must mean that she was so punished for having been foremost to accuse him of murder to Cleopatra, and thus bring about all the subsequent troubles. It is probable that she was not kept very long under confinement, and the correction does not seem to have produced in her any amendment. On regaining her liberty, and ceasing to have any further hope of Egyptian assistance, she commenced busily intriguing against Herod in another quarter, and so involved her aged father in guilt and hurried him to a traitor's doom. Josephus gives us in this instance two conflicting versions of what took place; and he presents us not only with Jewish history—that is, the account which he derived from his predecessors—but adds to it some of his own revelations, in which he professes to display Herod's inmost thoughts. When Antony was defeated by Octavianus at Actium, we are told that, in consequence of Herod's alliance with the former, "his friends despaired, in the expectation that he would suffer punishment, while his enemies were glad, in the hope of getting a change for the better. As for Herod himself, he saw that there was no one of royal dignity left but Hyrcanus, and therefore thought it would be well not to let him any longer remain as an obstacle in

his path; for, if he should escape the danger that threatened him from Cæsar, he thought it would be prudent to be further saved from the power of Hyrcanus, who was more worthy of the kingdom than himself; while, should he be put to death by Cæsar, his envy prompted him to slay the man who would otherwise become his successor" (Ant., xv. vi. 1).

23. With respect to this revelation of Herod's thoughts and designs, it certainly seems strange that he should take it into his head to kill Hyrcanus just when his own life was considered in imminent danger, and for no other reason than to get rid of a rival or possible successor, whose heirs were his own heirs, namely, the sons of Mariamne. And, what is still more wonderful, precisely at the time when he contemplated slaying his aged relative, the latter happened to commit an offence, which afforded him a convenient excuse for so doing. We are told that "while Herod had these things in his mind, there was a certain occasion offered him. Hyrcanus was of so mild a disposition, that he desired not to meddle with public affairs, nor make any disturbance, but left all to fortune, and was ever contented with his lot. On the other hand, Alexandra, his daughter, was a lover of strife, and desirous of a change in the government, and she urged her father not to bear any longer the indignity which their family suffered from Herod, but to anticipate their future prospects, as he now well might. She desired him to write to Malchus, the ruler of Arabia, and ask him to receive them and give them a safe refuge; for, if they so went away, and Herod should be deposed by Cæsar, they would be likely to obtain the government by reason of their high birth and the good will of the multitude. Hyrcanus refused for some time to listen to her persuasions; but, as she was

an obstinate and contentious woman, who would always be speaking about the matter and of Herod's treacherous designs, she at last induced him to send Dositheus, one of his friends, with a letter to Malchus. In this letter he desired the Arabian ruler to send some horsemen, who should receive him and conduct him to the lake Asphaltites which is three hundred furlongs from Jerusalem. Dositheus was a careful attendant, both on him and Alexandra, and was entrusted with the letter because he was supposed to bear ill-will to Herod, being a kinsman of the Joseph that he had slain, and a relative of those enemies of his who were formerly slain at Tyre by Antony. The remembrance of these grievances would not, however, induce Dositheus to serve Hyrcanus faithfully in carrying out the scheme; for, preferring the prospects which he had under the present king to those held out by his possible successors, he went and gave the letter to Herod. The king took this kindness in good part, and, having read the letter, he rolled it up and sealed it again, and bade him go, as he had been directed, and deliver it to Malchus and bring him the reply, that he might so know also that ruler's disposition. Dositheus performed his task accordingly and returned to the king, and Malchus wrote in reply that he would receive Hyrcanus and his friends, and even all the Jews that were of his party, and he promised to send forces sufficient to escort them on their way, and to provide them with all they should require. When Herod had received this letter, he immediately sent for Hyrcanus, and questioned him about the league he had made with Malchus; and when he denied it, the king showed the letter to the Sanhedrin, and straightway put him to death.

24. "This account of the transaction we give as it is contained in the archives of King Herod. But

other historians write differently, for they suppose that Herod did not find, but rather make, this an occasion for putting Hyrcanus to death, by treacherously laying a snare for him. They write to this effect: That Herod and he were once at a feast, and that Herod, without appearing to be in any way offended, asked Hyrcanus whether he had received any letters from Malchus. Hyrcanus answered that he had received letters from him, but those of salutation only. On being asked further whether he had received any presents, he replied that he had received no more than four horses, which Malchus had sent him to ride on. They say that Herod charged this on him as a crime of bribery and treason, and commanded that he should be led away and slain. And in order to demonstrate that he had been guilty of no offence when he was thus put to death, they affirm that his temper was mild even in youth, and that he was now above eighty years old, and knew that Herod's government was secure. They say, too, that he came from beyond the Euphrates, and left those who honoured him there to live by preference in Herod's dominion; and it was incredible, under these circumstances, that he should conspire against the king, but the plot was evidently one of Herod's own invention" (Ant., xv. vi. 2, 3).

25. Both these accounts represent that Hyrcanus was suddenly put to death without any trial; but even if he had been far more guilty, it is highly improbable that Herod would have ventured to deal out summary justice to a man of his exalted rank and creditable antecedents without the consent of the Roman Government or without even appealing to the president of Syria. Josephus was always ready to avail himself of any idle story or suggestion of Herod's prejudiced enemies that would help to cast a shadow over him, and serve to exhibit his



conduct in the worst possible light. There is not the least doubt that Hyrcanus, who, after his Parthian exile, had been invited back to Judea and honourably treated by the king, was actually detected in a treasonable correspondence with his foes, as stated in the royal archives, and that for this offence he was condemned to death. He, an aged man, and incapacitated for the duties of government, could not have been considered a dangerous rival of Herod, or an obstacle in his path, so long as he led a quiet life; and it is altogether incredible that the charge against him was wickedly manufactured for the purpose of effecting his removal. Moreover, what he did was the repetition of an old offence; his daughter Alexandra had previously engaged in a treasonable correspondence, for the purpose of obtaining in a foreign land a safe refuge and secure position to plot against the king's government. But, though Hyrcanus was clearly guilty of yielding to the seditious designs of his daughter, whom he ought to have firmly restrained and endeavoured to guide; when we take into consideration his great age, his peaceable disposition, his former dignity, and the friendship which had long subsisted between him and Herod, the punishment inflicted on him was certainly too severe. And why was he, a mere tool, who played only a subordinate part in the treason, put to death, while the far more guilty Alexandra was spared to work further mischief? She and Cleopatra, her fellow-conspirator, only lived to sacrifice their friends and ruin and destroy their respective dynasties; and, had they been rigorously struck down earlier in their career of wickedness, the world would have been saved from many troubles and a much greater effusion of blood.

26. The few inconsiderate steps that Hyrcanus was induced to take in the direction of treason

ought to have been pardoned, and not punished with death. But such severity was common enough in those days; and had either Herod or his father been guilty of the same amount of disloyalty when formerly serving under Hyrcanus, there can be little doubt that they would have speedily suffered a traitor's doom. However much we may feel disposed to blame him for punishing capitally certain seditious members of the Asmonean family with whom he had become related by marriage, the whole of them must have perished or gone into exile at an earlier period if it had not been for his aid and protection. With the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey, the time had come when Palestine, which had maintained for more than a century an independent position, could only be governed successfully as a tributary state in connexion with the Roman empire. Herod and his father Antipater could see this with the greatest clearness, and, with some educational pains, they got the feeble Hyrcanus to see it; but it was never seen and recognised by the rest of the Asmoneans. Aristobulus and his sons were determined to have independence, in spite of their altered circumstances, and thus there was nothing left for them but to go on rushing madly against the Roman steel till all were destroyed. If it had not been for his stout Idumean friends, Hyrcanus must have served under his impetuous brother, and gone heartily with the Nationalist party, or he must have opposed it as he best could with Jewish aid, and in either case would have been certain to perish.

27. Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, through marrying the son of Aristobulus, actually went over to the Nationalist or anti-Roman party; and after her husband was captured and slain, Herod in a manner reclaimed her from that faction, and brought her, with her two orphan children, back to the side

of peace and safety. And when Antigonus, the other son of Aristobulus, came to Jerusalem to wrest from Hyrcanus the Asmonean crown, supported by an army of Parthians, to whom he had promised to give five hundred Jewish women, Herod and his friends were in very great danger; and, in the event of his death or absence at this juncture, what would have become of Alexandra and her daughter Mariamne? They would have been delivered up as captives to Pacoras and his barbarous soldiers, and borne away to Parthia, never more to behold their native country, nor have any further communion with their kindred and race. But the noble Idumean stood by them and saved them from this degradation; he got them away from Jerusalem in the face of the greatest peril, turned about repeatedly, and beat off their pursuers, conveyed them with immense toil and difficulty to a place of refuge, and then went on from country to country, braving shipwreck and other dangers, and never resting till he returned with an army and effected their deliverance. At that time he also saved the son of Alexandra from death or a Parthian captivity, and would have saved her father from mutilation and exile but for his own simple credulity in trusting to a deceitful enemy. Eventually, through him, Hyrcanus, Alexandra, and her two children all returned to Jerusalem in great honour, and Mariamne, who might have been a captive of the Parthians, became his beloved queen and the foremost woman in Israel. Most women, if brought through great dangers, saved from degradation, and raised to such prosperous circumstances, would have been exceedingly contented and happy, and would have felt that they were under a life-long obligation to the strong man who had fought for them, toiled for them, enriched them, and given them their proud position. But Alexandra and her

daughter were, like the turbulent people whom they royally represented, full of discontent and ingratitude; they seemed to think that the Asmo-neans were a superior order of created beings; they fancied that they owed everything to their high birth, and believed that, so far from being in any way beholden to Herod, he was really under a great obligation to them.

28. There is nothing very extraordinary in a corrupt and degenerate people being thus led to over-estimate themselves through pride of birth and the inheritance of a distinguished name. Instances of high-caste conceit, very much like that of the declining Asmoneans, have been of frequent occurrence in every country and among almost every class. Not many years ago there lived in one of our midland towns a family that, for several generations, had carried on a manufacturing business with success, but from pride and extravagant habits at length fell into straightened circumstances, and were fast hurrying on to bankruptcy. They, fortunately, had as foreman and manager a young man who, by superior energy and good business talents, made up in some measure for their own defects, and staved off for a year or two their impending failure. But their burden of debt and their difficulties increased; a critical time came when they could go on no longer; they were compelled to sell off for the benefit of the creditors, and there seemed no other prospect before them but beggary. The young manager, however, by marrying one of the daughters, saved them from such a fate. Some capitalists, who had very great confidence in his ability and integrity, placed him in the business which they were forced to relinquish, and he thereupon, with much generosity, reinstated them, to a great extent, in their old position. His wife's parents and her sister con-



tinued to dwell with him in comfort, and even a profligate brother-in-law was partly depending on his exertions for support. Yet, it is remarkable that these people, in spite of their reduced circumstances and their dependent condition, retained their pernicious pride, and continued to treat the man who had so greatly befriended them as their inferior—in short, they seemed to think that he was highly favoured in being taken into their family. In one respect he might be said to surpass the young political manager, Herod, in moral worth; he bore the contemptuous behaviour of his wife and her relatives with admirable patience, and never failed to treat them with kindness. But then they were far less provoking than Alexandra and Mariamne; they were only proud, selfish, ungrateful people; and there is no saying what he might have done if they had gone so far as to obstruct his plans, interfere with his arrangements, circulate the foulest calumnies about him; and even treacherously ally themselves with those who coveted his business and were thirsting for his blood.

29. Josephus boasts of being related to the Asmonean family, and, as might be expected, is very strongly biassed in their favour; in all the dissensions which arose between them and Herod he invariably ranges himself on their side. This is especially observable in regard to the unhappy squabbles which arose from time to time between the king and Mariamne. It might, therefore, be supposed that modern investigators, desirous of getting at the truth, would be inclined to make some allowance for the prejudices of the Jewish historian, but, as we have already observed, they have in many instances shown themselves still more prejudiced, and have gone to even greater lengths in calumniating the king. A mistaken

feeling of chivalry has done its utmost to represent Herod as a veritable Bluebeard and Mariamne as a martyred saint. "History," says Dean Merivale, "hardly presents a more tragic situation than that of the devoted Mariamne, the miserable object of a furious attachment on the part of the monster who had slain before her eyes her uncle, her brother, and her grandfather. Herod doted upon her beauty, in which she bore away the palm from every princess of her time. The blood which flowed in her veins secured to him the throne which he had raised upon the ruins of her father's house; but her personal and political claims on the royal regard made her doubly obnoxious to the sister of the usurper, who felt alike humiliated by either. . . . But she, the last daughter of a noble race, endured with constancy to the end, and the favour of her admiring countrymen has not failed to accord to her a distinguished place in the long line of Jewish heroines" (*Hist. Rom.*, vol. iii. p. 393).

30. This is only one of a large class of grim Herodian pictures, which are far from being warranted by the narrative of Josephus. Although he has represented that Aristobulus was murdered, he has adduced nothing in support of the charge but prejudiced conjecture, and, on taking into account all the circumstances, together with the variations in the story, it is far more probable that Herod was calumniated. It was not he, but the Romans who slew the uncle of Mariamne; they were bound to slay him after his repeated sanguinary rebellions that wasted the country whether Herod approved of it or not, and he ought to have been slain long before. Had he lived and been successful in his last war, it would have been bad for Mariamne and her brother, and, as it was, he managed to barbarously mutilate her grandfather

and send him away into captivity. The fact is, that the greater part of the unjustifiable cruelty suffered by Asmonean princes was that which they inflicted on one another. Herod was no more a "usurper" than the present ruler of Afghanistan or the Governor-General of India can be so considered, and the blood which flowed in the veins of Mariamne was as valueless for the support of his throne as the water which flowed in the river Jordan. She made not the slightest effort to reconcile to his able rule her proud family and her prejudiced and disaffected countrymen, and he would all along have succeeded better without her hampering connexion. Nor is it true that Mariamne's "personal and political claims on the royal regard" made her doubly obnoxious to Salome. The real cause of her being greatly disliked by Herod's mother and sister was that she was insolent to them, and accustomed to reproach them with their inferior birth (Ant., xv. vii. 4). Shut up in the palace at Jerusalem, she very much resembled a beautiful caged tigress, frequently manifesting a disagreeable temper without having the opportunity to do much harm; but two more treacherous and mischievous people than her father and mother when at large probably never existed. She certainly hated her husband, and evidently conspired with her mother to get him put to death by Antony. We are inclined to discredit the story which was subsequently told by her domestics that she plotted to poison him; yet, if she had actually taken his life in this way, thousands of her disaffected countrymen would have gone mad with joy. Perhaps it was a belief that she did her utmost by crafty means to compass his destruction which induced them to honour her by giving her a distinguished place among such "Jewish heroines" as Jael, Abigail, and Judith.

31. It has been said, in extenuation of Mariamne's

petulant and waspish behaviour to Herod, that she was espoused to him when a mere child without her own wishes being consulted. But her case was in this respect by no means an exceptional one; the giving away a daughter in marriage, willing or unwilling, was then a general custom both among Jews and Gentiles. Even in modern times it extensively prevails, especially among noble and royal families. Thousands of girls, by reason of a marriage contract made in their behalf by relatives, have been forced to go away without repining to a strange land, and attach themselves ever after to a strange people. Many a brave princess has been known to submit to this trial even under more aggravating circumstances—has experienced much coldness and rudeness at her new home, or has met with all kinds of insults, or has suffered from a profligate husband's neglect—and has still conducted herself as a model of patience, gentleness, and propriety. Mariamne, thanks to him who had saved her from the Parthians, had not to make any such renunciation of home and kindred; she was always among her own people, and might, with a good temper and conciliatory spirit, have been the happiest woman in the country. Unfortunately, her disposition was the reverse of this, and it seemed scarcely possible for any one to live with her long in concord and peace. When the king was in the best possible humour and desired to win her regard, she taunted him occasionally about being cruel to her relatives, but seems to have never thanked him for what he did for their welfare. Many a prince has been forced into war with a father-in-law or a brother-in-law without thereby losing the affections of his wife. What if he had punished one or two members of her family with undue severity; it was well known that they had plotted against his government, and it was to her



shame that she had not stood by him and resolutely opposed their designs. On the other hand, his relatives would have treated her with the utmost respect, only that she made herself as disagreeable as possible to them, and revealed her littleness of mind by reproaching them for what she considered their mean birth.

32. On a review of the whole case, it cannot be denied that a considerable amount of blame attaches to Herod in respect to the domestic war which raged between him and his refractory spouse, and terminated eventually in her defeat and execution. Just as some parents pet and over-indulge their children for awhile till they at length become unbearable, and then are provoked to punish them with too much severity, so the king seems to have treated his pretty child wife. But, on comparing their quarrel with others of the same kind that have terminated fatally, there is nothing in his conduct towards Mariamne, from first to last, that justifies the repeated attempts which have been made to brand him as a monster of cruelty. Thousands of bad men, from the prince's rank to that of the peasant, have persecuted their poor wives in every conceivable way, and slowly tortured them to death, just because they were tired of them, and they saw other women who excited their cupidity. This was certainly not the case with Herod; though holding the high position of a king, and having the pick of the whole country, he met with no fair lady that he loved better than Mariamne. Indeed, she was all along known to be his favourite wife, and the idea of sacrificing her to make room for another never once entered his mind. He treated her, too, for years with the utmost tenderness and consideration, continued to regard her with a strong and steadfast love, although it was not reciprocated, and seemed always anxious

to defer to her wishes as much as possible and render her happy. Even after conspiring to get him condemned and using provoking and insolent language towards him, he passed off her ill-humour with a little pleasantry or bore it with dignified patience and moderation. Having been led to believe—on the joint testimony of his mother and sister—that she was guilty of adultery, he neither used any violence towards her, nor delivered her up to be dealt with according to the Jewish law, nor cast her off with a bill of divorcement, and he seemed willing to pardon and overlook all her transgressions, till he was at length under an apprehension that she had designs on his life.

33. With respect to the charge that Mariamne was guilty of adultery with Sohemus while Herod was absent at Rhodes, and the further charge that, under the guise of a philter, she had prepared for the king a deadly poison; considering how readily serious accusations were made at that period on the merest suspicion, neither of them seems entitled to any credit. But when a woman hates her husband, and is at the same time very beautiful and exceedingly indiscreet—as was the case with Mariamne—she renders herself in an especial manner liable to suspicion. And if such a woman is also foolish enough to insult and provoke her husband's female relatives, as Mariamne did, it is hardly possible that she should escape being suspected and made a subject of scandalous tales. Herod had very great confidence in his mother and sister, and, believing their joint testimony against Mariamne, he deemed it prudent to have her arrested and put under restraint, that she should be rendered incapable of further mischief. When tried on the charge of attempting to poison him, the court, after hearing the evidence of the domestics—evidence which was likely to be worthless—condemned her to death;

but at his suggestion the sentence was commuted to imprisonment in one of the national fortresses. He had manifestly no settled determination to be rid of her, but, like Reuben when putting Joseph into the pit (Gen. xxxvii. 22), was desirous to save her from others, and probably thought that a term of imprisonment would so humble her proud spirit, that she might be presently pardoned with safety and restored to liberty. His mother and sister were evidently apprehensive of such a result: they doubtless thought that he would soon be releasing Mariamne from confinement, as he had already more than once released Alexandra, and, hoping to be finally quit of their ill-tempered relative, they persistently worried him to carry out the sentence of the court. He yielded at length to their entreaties and ordered her execution, sacrificing one quarrelsome member of his household to afford peace and contentment to the rest. The fatal command, for which he has been so much execrated, was given with great reluctance, and, cruel as he is supposed to have been, he speedily repented that he had not after all saved his beautiful Mariamne, and was overwhelmed with grief. Contrast his behaviour with that of the heartless mother, who, after doing all she could to make the daughter a disaffected and rebellious wife, stood by at the place of execution and aggravated her sorrows by loading her with hypocritical reproaches. Contrast it again with the behaviour of both these women, who, when Herod at their instigation was summoned before Antony and the rumour of his being executed arrived in Jerusalem, prepared not to mourn and weep for their brave relative, but to make themselves presentable as speedily as possible, and go forth and graciously salute his executioner!

34. We are told that Mariamne "went to her death with unshaken fortitude, not even changing

the colour of her face, and thereby evincing the nobility of her descent to the spectators, even in her last moments. Thus died Mariamne, a woman of excellent character, both for chastity and greatness of soul, but she wanted moderation, and had too much contention in her nature. She had all that could be desired in the beauty of her body, and her majestic manner in conversation, and this was the chief reason why she did not make herself so agreeable to the king, nor live so pleasantly with him as she might have done. For, while she was most indulgently treated by Herod, from being so very fond of her, she was led to believe that he could never be hard with her, and so took on herself an unbounded liberty. That which most grieved her was, what he had done to her relatives, and she ventured to speak boldly of all they had suffered from him, and at last greatly provoked both his mother and sister, till they became her enemies. Then at length even he himself turned against her, on whom alone she had rested her hope of escaping extreme punishment. But when she was once dead, the king's strong affection for her burst forth again stronger than ever, and excited him in such a peculiar way, that it looked as if divine vengeance had fallen on him for depriving her of life. He frequently called and lamented after her, and did all he could by feasts and other means to divert his mind from mourning, but nothing would suffice. And when he was in this melancholy way, and had ceased to attend to public business, there arose a pestilence which carried off the greater part of the population, and among them his best and most esteemed friends, which made all men suspect that it was a divine judgment for what he had done to Mariamne. This calamity affected the king still more, till at length he wandered into desert places, and there under the pretence of hunting, bitterly



afflicted himself. Then he fell into a dangerous distemper, accompanied by madness, for which the physicians could find no remedy. This was while he dwelt at Sebaste" (Ant., xv. vii. 6, 7).

35. The madness which Josephus says afflicted Herod after the death of his beloved Mariamne, affords a good subject for theatrical display, and Mr. Stephen Phillips, and other dramatists, have skilfully used it for such purpose. Very little value, however, can be attached to it as history, especially as it comes only from a prejudiced Asmonean source. Another Maccabean writer—the author of Daniel—informs us that King Nebuchadnezzar went mad, and was reduced to such a wretched condition, "that he was driven from men and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven" (iv. 33). It was customary with the Jews to heap curses and all kinds of divine judgments on rulers whom they hated greatly, but were not able to punish with their own hands. Herod had many troubles to worry him, and we may reasonably suppose that he grieved bitterly after the execution of Mariamne, but not to such an extent as to become quite demented. Had grief so disordered his mind as to render him actually insane, the able counsellors about him would have consulted Cæsar on the subject, and he would have been treated as an irresponsible person incapable of exercising any longer the powers of government. Some arrangement would have been made to cope with the difficulty, such as the appointment of one of his sons to act in the capacity of regent. But as no such politic steps seem to have been taken, we may reasonably conclude that Herod's alleged madness was, like certain other things imputed to him, a figment of the imagination only perceptible to his prejudiced adversaries.

36. Herod appears to have suffered from a

severe indisposition, which was aggravated, to a great extent by mental worry, and his enemies would not fail to exaggerate his affliction and deem it a just punishment, as they also did the epidemic which prevailed at the same period. There is little doubt that the king's ill health really preceded the execution of Mariamne, and that if he had possessed all his wonted energy and robustness of mind, he would not have yielded to the persuasions of his vindictive relatives. The great sorrow which he afterwards experienced for having failed in his capacity of chief magistrate to grant her a pardon or further reprieve, was certainly not, as it is commonly represented to be, the contrition of a criminal. "Nothing can be more pathetic," says Dean Stanley, "than his remorse for his domestic crimes. The penitence of Herod reminds us of that of the murderer of Uriah, but he has left no psalms in which it has been enshrined for the admiration of posterity" (Lectures, vol. iii. p. 430). In reality, the two cases thus placed in juxtaposition are as different as possible. If Herod had contrived to get Mariamne treacherously murdered and put out of the way that he might more freely carry on an adulterous intercourse with another woman, his offence could only fairly be made parallel with that of David. He had committed no crime to repent of in this case, yet might reasonably feel much sorrow for not having saved Mariamne's life through his weakness and irresolution. He probably reflected, that she was spoilt as a child for want of good training, and that he, by being for a long while foolishly indulgent to her, was, to a certain extent, responsible for her failings. He might think, too, that the scandalous stories told of her were not, after all, so credible as he at first supposed, and it would be further likely to occur to him, that had she all along resided apart

from his relatives, and been separated, at the same time, from her intriguing mother, the various troubles in connection with her would have never arisen. Such melancholy reflections and bitter regrets as these, without any other sorrow, would have been quite sufficient to worry the poor king, already in failing health, nearly to the point of distraction.

37. If Mariamne was badly brought up as a child, treated in her early married life with every indulgence, pardoned many times for disloyalty to her husband, and, at length, accused on insufficient evidence of murderous designs, as she had also accused him, and too severely punished with death; that affords no reason for making her out a heroine. Neither does her character deserve any more favourable consideration from the circumstance of her possessing great personal beauty; it is most unreasonable to deem people's actions good or bad according as they are well or ill-featured or bodily proportioned. Poets, however, who would make very indifferent jurymen, are almost invariably prepossessed in favour of beautiful women that are accused of any guilt, and we cannot wonder at Mariamne being held up to admiration by such writers as Voltaire and Byron. They were both Grecian in sentiment, had neither of them the slightest sympathy with the Jewish prejudices of Josephus, yet, in this particular instance, they deemed it worth while to adhere strictly to the Jewish tradition. Some of their eloquent language in her honour, and her husband's disparagement, Dean Stanley has, in his "Lectures," thought well to repeat, and, out of fairness towards her, we will here give his quotations and accompanying remarks further repetition:—"When Voltaire apologised to the French for having chosen Mariamne for the subject of one of his poetic plays he rose to its

grandeur with an enthusiasm unlike himself. ('A king to whom has been given the name of Great, enamoured of the loveliest woman in the world; the fierce passion of the king so famous for his virtues and for his crimes—his ever-recurring and rapid transitions from love to hatred, and from hatred to love—the ambition of his sister, the intrigues of his concubines—the cruel situation of a princess whose virtue and beauty are still world-renowned, who had seen her kinsmen slain by her husband, and who, as the climax of grief, found herself loved by their murderer—what a field of imagination is this! What a career for some other genius than mine!') And when, at last, another genius arose who had, as Goethe observed, a special aptitude for apprehending the ancient Biblical characters there are few of his poems at once more pathetic in themselves and more true to history than that which represents the unhappy king wandering through the galleries of his palace and still invoking his murdered wife:—

“Oh, Mariamne! now for thee  
 The heart for which thou bled'st is bleeding.  
 Revenge is lost in agony,  
 And wild remorse to rage succeeding.  
 Oh, Mariamne, where art thou?  
 Thou can'st not hear my bitter pleading.  
 Ah! could'st thou—thou would'st pardon now,  
 Though Heaven were to my prayer unheeding.

“She's gone; she shared my diadem;  
 She sank, with her my joys entombing,  
 I swept that flower from Judah's stem  
 Whose leaves for me alone were blooming.  
 And mine's the guilt and mine the hell  
 This bosom's desolation dooming,  
 And I have earned these tortures well  
 Which unconsumed are still consuming.”

(Hebrew Melodies.)



38. Some time after witnessing the execution of her daughter, for which, indeed, she was to a great extent responsible, the ever-intriguing Alexandra, on hearing that Herod was dangerously ill, began to concert measures again in anticipation of his death—that is, she endeavoured to get possession of the fortresses which commanded the Temple and the city, in order to secure the government for the sons of Mariamne. There was nothing very wrong in her thus looking after the interests of her grand-children; she was only acting in their behalf precipitately. However, the governors of the fortresses, by whom she was cordially hated, made known her designs to Herod, who, after having repeatedly pardoned her for worse offences, would now bear with her meddling no longer, and forthwith ordered her to be put to death. He is said to have been, at this period, suffering greatly from ill health, and “readier than ever to inflict punishment on those who gave offence.” This would naturally be the case, as has been observed of many other rulers and judges, both in ancient and modern times. When full of health and strength, he was also full of generosity; but sickness, which sours the temper of most people, undoubtedly had an injurious influence in his disposition, and rendered him, in dealing with offenders, more wrathful and inexorable. Little commiseration, however, can be felt for Alexandra, whose mischevous career ought to have been brought to a close long before, either by death or perpetual imprisonment.

39. Salome, the king’s sister, seems to have been harsh-tempered, and too much given to scandal and suspicion, but she proved herself at times a strong, sagacious, queenly woman, and, unquestionably, rendered Herod considerable assistance in the government of the country. After her husband, Joseph, was executed, she married again to Costo-

barus, an Idumean nobleman, who, when made governor of Idumea, became a traitor to his brother-in-law, and endeavoured, through Cleopatra's assistance, to obtain the independence of that country. Herod, on discovering his treason, resolved to put him to death—and the Jews, in this case, would have heartily approved of such severity—but, at the earnest entreaty of Salome, granted him a pardon, though still regarding him with suspicion and distrust. "Some time after, when Salome quarrelled with Costobarus, she gave him a bill of divorcement and dissolved her marriage with him, though this was not according to the Jewish law. For, with us, a man may divorce his wife, but a woman is not allowed to divorce her husband. However, Salome chose to follow not the law of her country, but the law of her authority; and she told Herod how it was from good-will to him that she had left her husband, because she perceived that he, with Gadius, Lysimachus, and Dositheus, were raising against him a sedition. As one evidence of this, she mentioned the case of the sons of Babas—how they had been screened from justice by him for the space of twelve years, which proved to be quite true. But, when Herod, thus unexpectedly heard of it, he was greatly surprised, and the report seemed to him almost incredible. For, when he was fighting against Antigonus at the siege of Jerusalem, he was anxious to have these sons of Babas slain with the other chief enemies of his government, and he thought that they were slain. The people at that time were in much distress by reason of the siege, and the majority of them had placed their hopes already in Herod, and wished to invite him into the city. Then the sons of Babas, who were obstinate partisans of Antigonus, raised calumnies against Herod, and encouraged the people to prolong their resistance. So, when

the city was at length taken, Costobarus was appointed to guard the gates, and see that those men who were most guilty and deserving of death should find no way of escape. But he, knowing that the sons of Babas were men of high rank, who might some day reward his friendship, managed to conceal them and send them away privately on his farms. And when this concealment was suspected, he assured Herod upon oath that he knew nothing of the matter, and so quite overcame his suspicions. Even when the king offered a reward for the discovery of these men, and resorted to various other methods of tracing them out, Costobarus still kept them safely concealed. But when the king at length got his sister's information, he sent men at once to the places where they were known to be hid, and had them arrested and slain, together with Costobarus and the others who were guilty of sedition. And now there was not one left of the kindred of Hyrcanus, nor any remaining of sufficient authority to prevent Herod from transgressing the Jewish laws" (Ant., xv. vii. 10).

40. The two sons whom Herod had by Mariamne, were named Alexander and Aristobulus, after her father and grandfather, and in temperament and disposition they seem to have borne some resemblance to the royal Asmonean race. As one or both were designed to succeed their father in preference to his other sons, they were sent to Rome to receive there, under the direction of Augustus, a princely education. Whatever else they may have learned during their residence in Rome, they did not learn discretion, any more than their rebellious namesakes who preceded them there in a state of captivity. A large population of emigrant Jews then dwelt in the city, among whom were some of their father's disaffected subjects who, undoubtedly, got at them and poisoned their minds, and en-

couraged them to look forward to the time when they should be able to avenge their mother's wrongs, and bring about a great change in the government. Some time after their mother's death they returned to Jerusalem, and Herod selected wives for them; Alexander, the elder, was married to Glaphyra, daughter of the king of Cappadocia; and Aristobulus, the younger to his cousin, Berenice, the daughter of Salome. They might, now, have lived in great dignity, inherited their father's government, and continued his good work of reconciling races and maintaining the advantages of peace; but they fell under the influence of the mischievous people who had already disturbed the royal household, and they soon showed an unmistakable disposition to keep up the Asmonean vendetta. Josephus, writing as their partisan, says, "As soon as the young men were come from Italy, the multitude were eager to see them, and they became at once distinguished among all, being adorned with the blessings of fortune, and having the appearance of royal personages. So they soon became objects of envy to Salome, the king's sister, and to such as had raised calumnies against Mariamne; for it was feared by them that when the young men came to the government they should be punished for the wickedness they had been guilty of against their mother, so they made this very fear of theirs a motive for calumniating them as well. They gave it out, that the young men were not pleased with their father's company because he had put their mother to death, as if it were not consistent with piety to converse with their mother's murderer" (Ant., xvi. i. 2).

41. The historian, further on, repeats this representation to the prejudice of Herod's non-Jewish relatives, as follows: "The hatred of Salome to the princes descended, as it were, by inheritance



from their mother, Mariamne ; for, as she had succeeded against the mother, so she seemed determined that none of her posterity should be left alive to revenge her death. The young men had also somewhat of a bold and disaffected spirit towards their father, occasioned by the remembrance of what their mother had unjustly suffered, and by their own desire to hold the reins of government. The old grudge was thus renewed, and they cast reproaches on Salome and Pheroras, who requited them with evil designs, and actually laid snares to entrap them. The hatred was equal on both sides, but the manner of expressing it was different. For the young men were rash, reproaching and affronting the others openly, and were inexperienced enough to think it best to declare their minds in that undaunted manner. But the others made use of calumnies, and provoked the young men in an artful way, believing that they would at length go so far as to offer violence to their father, and avenge on him their mother's death. At length it came to this, that the whole city was full of their discourses, and their unskilfulness and rashness were pitied. But the contrivance of Salome was too hard for them, and, by reason of their own conduct, the allegations which she made against them were readily believed. For they were deeply affected by their mother's death, and vehemently complained of her pitiable end, which, indeed, was truly such, and they said it was hard to be forced to live with those who had put her to death. The king's absence abroad allowed these dissensions in his palace to grow without interruption ; but, as soon as he returned, Salome and Pheroras told him of the young men's vindictive expressions, and said they had fixed their hopes on Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, and intended by his means to accuse their father before Cæsar. Herod

was much disturbed on hearing this information, and the more so when the same things were told him by other people. He then called to mind the former disturbance in his family, and feared that his future troubles would be greater and heavier than the past. For he had much success and continual prosperity in his government, but his domestic miseries were such as he had never looked for, and it is doubtful whether all the outward grandeur of his kingdom compensated him for the troubles which he experienced in his own household" (Ant., xvi. iii. 1, 2).

42. The Jewish historian thus endeavours to cast the blame of the second great dissension which broke out in Herod's family chiefly on Salome and Pheroras, who, he says, artfully inflamed the minds of the young princes, and afterwards calumniated them. We are convinced that his representation is wholly untrue; for it was not to the interest of either of those distinguished members of the royal household to stir up such a quarrel, and conspire to injure the prospects of their brother's heirs. Pheroras had not been on unfriendly terms with Mariamne, and neither could he have the least prejudice against her children, nor any reason to fear their resentment. He could not hope to profit by the ruin of his royal nephews, and must have felt every inducement to cultivate amicable relations with them, and show them respect. Salome had quarrelled much with Mariamne, but only by way of retaliation for the insults which she received. And she would not, on account of bygone differences with the mother, have been likely to manifest any foolish vindictiveness against the children, or raise an opposition to their claims, when all people were paying court to them; and it was not doubted that one or both would succeed their father in the government of the country. Her readiness to forget

the past, and her perfect good will to the royal children, are clearly shown in the fact that she gave to one of them her daughter Berenice in marriage. By this union her interest became strictly bound up with their interest; and it is not at all probable that she and her friends would either envy them, or fear them, or raise any evil report against them, so long as their own behaviour was marked by civility and respect.

43. Pheroras and Salome were certainly not the authors of the strife, as it is pretended, and neither is it likely that the unhappy disposition which animated the young princes was spontaneously developed in their own minds. In every age, and among every race, it has been usual for people to take the part of relatives against their enemies, and, in the event of their falling in a conflict, to avenge their death. But when a father and a mother contend violently, and one of them at length, in a personal encounter or through a judicial sentence, causes the death of the other, it is not usual, nor even natural, for their joint offspring to be fired, by such a result, with feelings of resentment. If only left to themselves, they are pretty sure, in such circumstances, to maintain a sorrowing and neutral attitude, unless it happens that they have been reluctantly made partisans by having suffered from one parent ill-treatment. Had, then, Alexander and Aristobulus any reason to complain of being hardly and cruelly used by their father, Herod? Did the king, in casting off the mother, make them, the children, partakers of her guilt, and participators in her punishment, that they should feel resentment, and range themselves wholly on her side? Children have frequently been disinherited and turned adrift in the world entirely on account of their mother's faults; but it is well known that not a shadow of such injustice

fell on the sons of Mariamne. Her condemnation and death made no difference whatever to their fortune; they stood just as high in their father's affection and regard as before; and they were much more under obligations to their father than they were to their mother, for he had preferred them before his other children, given them their princely education at Rome, and had obtained for them, as the best security for their future government, the patronage and friendly interest of Cæsar. Had they been left to themselves, therefore, it is quite possible that they might have privately mourned for their mother, and believed that her death was undeserved; but it is utterly inconceivable that they would proceed to openly denounce their kind and generous father, and stir up against him an Asmonean vendetta; that rebellious spirit must have been wickedly instilled into their minds by others.

44. The real authors of the trouble which arose between Herod and the sons of Mariamne were unquestionably disaffected Jewish Nationalists, partisans of the Asmonean family, who got at the young men and inflamed their minds with stories of their mother's innocence and wrongs. After the final overthrow of Antigonus, when it was no longer practicable to make open war against Herod, his defeated but irreconcilable enemies altered their tactics, and did all in their power to weaken his authority by insidiously stirring up rebellion against him in his own household. They found their opportunity for effecting this mischief in his unfortunate union with the princess Mariamne. They incited Alexandra and her daughter to intrigue against him, contend with him, and wrest from his hands the reins of government; and these foolish women, miscalculating his strength and their own importance, only flung themselves against a rock to be broken and crushed. Now that the king's



Asmonean relatives were sacrificed, one after another, in the persistent struggle to effect his overthrow, the same evil counsel was given to his half-Asmonean sons. It was hoped that these young men would avenge their mother's death, and speedily restore in their own persons the drooping fortunes of the royal race; and had they actually slain their father in an open quarrel, or contrived to bring about his death through the instrumentality of hired assassins, it would have caused much rejoicing everywhere among the Asmonean faction, and would not have been considered a crime. The princes should have been well on their guard against their father's insidious enemies, who came to them in the guise of friendship, inflaming their minds; they ought to have declared plainly that they honoured both father and mother, regretted their unhappy differences, and wished to maintain friendly relations with all parties, and heal the nation's strifes. Herod himself is to be blamed for going into Asia Minor on a political tour with his friend Agrippa, and leaving his youthful sons at Jerusalem exposed to all the evil counsel and mischievous intrigue of the faction who hated him, and were eager to subvert his government. He should have taken them with him in his journey, or, still better, employed them by sending them into Galilee and Trachonitis as tetrarchs, and there surrounding them with loyal men. He found out at length and deplored the foul means which had been resorted to by his enemies to fill them with the spirit of rebellion, when it was too late for the evil to be corrected.

45. The first dissension in Herod's family, which resulted in the death of Mariamne, had much of its evil root in pride of birth. The Asmoneans, for upwards of a hundred years, had been considered a royal race, and she was, consequently, ever taunting

her husband's mother and sister on their meaner origin. It would have been well if her two sons could have shown more sense in this respect; but they had the same bad counsellors at Jerusalem, and naturally became proud of their royal Asmonean blood. Moreover Glaphyra, the wife of Alexander, being a daughter of the king of Cappadocia, was as much conceited and inclined to reproach Herod's relatives on the score of mean descent as Mariamne herself had been. She declared "that she was a lady superior to all others in the kingdom, being derived, on her father's side, from Temenus, and on her mother's side from Darius the son of Hystaspes. She also frequently reproached Herod's sister and wives with the ignobility of their origin, and how the latter were chosen by him for their features, and not for their family. Now, he had several wives, as the Jews are permitted to marry many, and they all hated Alexander on account of Glaphyra's boasting and reproaches. Then Aristobulus, being angry at Glaphyra's taunts, raised a quarrel with his mother-in-law, Salome, for he continually upbraided his wife with the meanness of her family, and complained that, while he had wedded a woman of low parentage, his brother Alexander had married one of royal blood. At this, Salome's daughter wept, and told it to her mother, with this addition, that Alexander threatened, when he should come to the throne, he would make the mothers of his other brethren weave with their servants, and would make those brothers of his, who had been so well instructed, village schoolmasters. Salome was thus made very angry, and she related the whole to Herod, nor could her testimony be doubted, as it was against her own son-in-law. There was also another story that got abroad and inflamed the king's mind, for he heard that these two sons were continually speaking of

their mother, and, while they lamented her, could not keep from cursing him. It was further said that when they heard how he had presented to his other wives the garments of Mariamne, they threatened that these women in a little time should be clad in nothing better than hair-cloth" (War, i. xxiv. 2, 3).

46. Herod was grieved at the proud, vindictive spirit manifested by these two sons, who were designed to succeed him in the government, and very properly remonstrated with them on their undutiful conduct, but without being able to bring them to a better frame of mind. They told him that the stories which he heard respecting them were calumnies, against which he ought to close his ears. But various circumstances rendered it probable that what was said of their revengeful threats was in the main correct, while their denials were of little worth, since they were both of them subsequently convicted of gross falsehoods. The king, at length, with the view to humble them, and let them know that the succession did not necessarily fall to them or belong to them exclusively, brought back his eldest son, Antipater, who had long been disinherited and exiled from court, and treated him as their possible rival. This was, on the whole, an unwise step and bad for both parties; the two refractory sons should have been made tetrarchs, or brought by some other such means to a more reasonable mind, and Antipater left in the obscurity which he had long borne with contentment. Alexander and Aristobulus, so far from being rendered more tractable by the presence of Antipater, thought that their father, in placing his first-born on a level with themselves, who were of royal blood, was doing them a very great injustice. They were evidently led to believe, and their claim to the succession would be supported both by Cæsar

and by the king of Cappadocia, and that, having besides the multitude in their favour, they should be altogether independent of their father's decision. At the same time Antipater, who had long been suffering patiently from a real injustice, now saw a fair prospect of recovering what he considered his true position and his birthright, so that he was careful to oblige his father and do all that was possible to establish himself more firmly in the royal regard. He thus soon began to be looked upon by many as the future king, and gathered sympathetic partisans about him, but it was only to create for himself, at the same time, a multitude of foes, and eventually increase his sorrows. It might be said, indeed, of this unfortunate and much-maligned prince that, after having long been driven from his father's hearth, and turned out, as it were, into the cold, he was now unexpectedly brought home to be thrust into the fire.

47. The powerful Asmonean faction, who had been building their hopes on the sons of Mariamne, and inciting them against their father, were naturally enough enraged at finding their designs suddenly checked by Antipater's return to Jerusalem. They regarded this elder son ever after with intense hatred and jealousy, as the promise of a second Herod, and continually plotted against him, till they succeeded at length in hunting him to death. He had not only opposed to him all his father's enemies, but some of his most distinguished friends, among whom was the historian Nicolaus of Damascus. All that we find written of him in the pages of Josephus deserves, therefore, to be received with caution, as it is evidently derived from a hostile and prejudiced source. We are told that he was perpetually calumniating his brethren, the sons of Mariamne, and that he succeeded by many crafty and wicked devices in completely alienating his



father's affections from them, and working their ruin. But it may be seen clearly, on the whole face of the narrative, that this charge itself is a calumny on the part of his enemies. When Herod returned from Asia Minor, he learnt from several persons that the young princes were disaffected towards him, and it was only in consequence of these reports, and the further proof which he had of their rebellious spirit, that his eldest son was recalled and reinstated in the palace. We have already shown how, previously to that event, Pheroras and Salome are falsely represented as being the foremost enemies of the young men, and the authors of all the suspicion and distrust which gathered about them. But, on Antipater appearing on the scene, he is at once made out to be the devil in the palace, and the source of all the mischief, and the historian even goes so far as to say, "Antipater also caused their uncle Pheroras to be their enemy, and their aunt Salome, while he was always talking to her as with a wife, and exciting her against them" (War, i. xxiv. 2). Such contradictory statements reveal the intense hostility and prejudice of the writer, and refute themselves. What charges were brought against the sons of Mariamne after Antipater's return, clearly did not originate from him but from others, although he undoubtedly gave ear to those charges and helped to sustain their credibility. And how could any man be expected to do otherwise, circumstanced as he then was, and suffering greatly, as he had, through being ousted by those younger relatives from what he must have considered his rightful position?

48. The king became more and more uneasy at the threatening aspect of his family troubles, for he saw plainly that, in the event of his death, Antipater and the sons of Mariamne, at the head of their respective

followers, would be certain to fight for the succession. Taking all things into account, he now thought that the best hope of maintaining peace would be in effecting a sort of compromise between the respective claimants; but as Alexander and Aristobulus would not be likely to bow to his decision, he appealed to the judgment of Cæsar. He had already sent Antipater to Rome to make the acquaintance and cultivate the goodwill of the emperor, and he now took the rival princes there, and accused them before their common friend of undutiful and disloyal conduct. Though they had been treated with the greatest kindness, he affirmed that they behaved towards him as enemies, and were in such a hurry to get possession of the kingdom that they seemed to be longing for his death. The kingdom had been gained by him with great trouble and risk, and he thought that he had certainly a right to keep it, and dispose of it as a reward to such of his sons as should deserve best. Alexander, the elder son, in reply to this complaint of his father, delivered a speech of considerable ability, representing that he and his brother were the unhappy victims of suspicion and false reports. He contended that they really had no evil designs against their father, such as their enemies imputed to them; and his humble and sorrowful demeanour, and the horror which he expressed at the wickedness of which they were supposed to be guilty, produced on all who heard him a favourable impression. When both parties had thus made their statements, the emperor did his utmost to restore harmony between them, exhorting them to put away unjust suspicions, and have in future a proper regard and goodwill for each other. The young men at length knelt down and begged their father's pardon, who took them up and embraced them as they were in tears, and took each of them distinctly

in his arms, so that all who were present became greatly affected at the sight.

49. Having become thus formally reconciled with his sons through the mediation of Cæsar, Herod returned with them to Jerusalem, and there summoned an assembly and presensed Antipater, Alexander, and Aristobulus to the people. He then proceeded in a speech to give an explicit account of the arrangement which had been made at Rome respecting the succession. “‘Cæsar,’ he said, ‘has permitted me to dispose of the government and appoint my successor. I, therefore, in consulting my own interest, requite his kindness, and to effect both objects declare that these my three sons shall be kings, and I implore first God, and afterwards yourselves, to ratify this decision. The first son is entitled to succeed me by seniority, the other two by nobility. And, indeed, my dominions are so extensive that they would suffice for even more kings. Now, do you keep these three sons in their places, whom Cæsar has joined and their father has appointed, and do not pay to either of them undue or unsuitable respect, but treat each according to his age. For no one can gratify the individual who is courted beyond what befits his age so much as he will offend those who are neglected. As for the kindred and friends who are to hold conversation with them, I will appoint these myself to each of them, and they shall be held responsible for my sons’ agreement. For it is the evil disposition of their associates which begets discord and contention, and if good men have intercourse with them, they will persuade them to be well affected towards each other. I desire, moreover, not only these companions of my sons, but the captains of my army, to place their hopes for the present on me alone; for I do not now give away the kingdom to these sons, but only its

honours ; they shall enjoy the sweets of government while the burden will rest on me. Consider my age, and what virtue I have exercised, and how I have conducted my life ; for I am not very old, and neither have I indulged in pleasures which shorten a man's existence, and we who have been religious towards God may reasonably hope to attain length of days. Now, if any one shall court my sons for the purpose of doing me harm, he shall on that account suffer punishment. It is not through any jealousy of my own children that I prohibit men from showing them respect, but I know that if too much attention is bestowed upon them it will only fill them with conceit. All who go near them should, therefore, bear this in mind ; such as are honest men, and trying to influence them for good, shall receive their just reward, but those who seek to make mischief and kindle discord will find that their malice is unprofitable. Certainly, the loyal subjects that are on my side will also be on my sons' side, for our interests are one, and it is to their advantage that I now reign and live with them in concord. And do you, my good children, cherish fraternal unity first in consideration of the sacred ties of nature, for the love of kindred is observed even among wild beasts. Remember next, that this reconciliation has been brought about by the mediation of Cæsar ; and, further, consider me your father entreating you to live as brethren when I have power to command. I minister to your necessities, present you with royal apparel and attendance, that you may live together in harmony, and pray God to ratify this arrangement.' When the king had thus spoken, he tenderly embraced each of his sons and dismissed the multitude, some of whom gave their assent to what he had said, and wished that his words might be fulfilled ; but others, who wanted



a change in the government, pretended that they were not able to hear his speech" (War, i. xxiii. 5.

50. There can be no doubt that many of the audience were hard of hearing on this occasion. The prospect of obtaining another ruler of Nationalist leanings, which they had been impatiently waiting for, must have been put further off than ever by this speech, so as to cause them bitter disappointment. No parent ever tried more heartily than Herod to reconcile the divisions of his household, but the efforts which he made in this direction do very little credit to his sagacity, and seem, indeed, to denote that his original mental vigour was from age, ill-health, and constant worry, beginning to fail him. He was now aware that it was through the evil counsel of seditious people that the sons of Mariamne had become disaffected towards him, and he vainly hoped that these people—his implacable enemies—would be induced by a little public admonition to abstain from further mischief, or that the princes would, at least, be saved from their influence by being surrounded by a cordon of loyal men. It might have been worth while to impose such restrictions on their fellowship at an earlier period, but the precaution was too late now that they had a large connexion of seditious friends, and were thoroughly imbued with the same spirit. Moreover, the compromise which he resolved to make between Antipater and the two rival sons so that they should all three be kings in succession, was a visionary scheme, not calculated to afford satisfaction to either party. The younger princes, who were eager to lay hold of the government in their father's lifetime, would not have borne patiently the postponement of their claims till the death of Antipater. And this prince, if he had been permitted to reign in peace, would naturally have

expected the succession to go to his own children. It seems, indeed, surprising, that Augustus Cæsar should have ever given his sanction to such an impracticable arrangement, from which nothing could be looked for but civil war. The only reasonable means of settling the differences between Herod's three sons was by getting them away from the intrigues of the palace and the factious strife of Jerusalem, and making them respectively tetrarchs over three distinct provinces, with the promise of the kingdom to the one who should succeed best in his provincial government. Had the emperor as an arbitrator only acted imperatively, and dealt with these contending sons as he dealt with their brethren, Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip, after Herod's death, he might have made one or more of them worthy successors of their father, or, at least, have managed to save their lives.

51. In a little while, the family feud, which Herod had patched up with a sort of hollow truce, broke out again with more virulence than ever; and so long as his sons lived idly in the palace and listened to the gossip of their respective partisans, their differences, even with the best judicial arrangement, were sure to prove irreconcilable. The Jewish historian says nothing whatever about the intrigues of the Asmonean faction, and seems disposed to trace the further outbreak of strife to any imaginable cause rather than the real one. Thus he says, "Herod's family troubles appeared to be increased by reason of the attempt which he made on David's sepulchre. . . . However, Antipater used stratagems against his brethren, and that very cunningly, while abroad he loaded them with accusations, but still took upon him frequently to apologise for them, that this apparent kindness might make him believed and forward his designs against them, by which means he in various ways circumvented his father,

who believed that all he did was for his preservation" (Ant., xvi. vii. 2). We have already shown that the alleged plunder of David's sepulchre by Herod can only be regarded as an absurd Jewish myth; and the charge made against Antipater of perpetually plotting to injure his brethren, if not mythical, is at least untruthful. He did not cause the estrangement between them and their father, but was forced into a position of antagonism towards them after their minds had been inflamed by others, and, as we shall see in the end, was himself much more calumniated than a calumniator. His mother had been divorced, and he disinherited and turned adrift in the world, not for any fault of their own, but to make room for the king's new relatives; and now, when they were at length reinstated in the palace, this reparation which they received made them objects of intense hatred to the Asmonean faction, and whatever disgrace the sons of Mariamne brought upon themselves was supposed to have been artfully contrived by their rival brother. The further charge made against Salome and Pheroras of endeavouring to increase the estrangement between their brother and his sons by reporting that he was violently enamoured with Glaphyra, Alexander's wife, probably originated from some foolish gossip of the palace, and is a story not entitled to belief. They could neither of them hope to profit by adding fuel to the flame, and must have been stark mad to do so in such a shameful manner that their wickedness must necessarily recoil on their own heads. Had Pheroras been such a base, unscrupulous villain as he is here represented, no official trust could have been reposed in him, and the king would not have "had a great affection for him to the last day of his life" (War, i. xxix. 4).

52. Herod himself was not only a sincere lover of

peace, but a great peacemaker; nothing seemed to afford him more pleasure than the settlement of a quarrel, or the establishment of friendly relations between those who had long been at variance. We are told that when the people of Ilium had a dispute with Marcus Agrippa, he stood between them as a mutual friend, and effected their reconciliation. At a subsequent period, when the King of Cappadocia and the president of Syria were on bad terms, he also interposed as a mediator, and speedily restored them to harmony. Moreover, he succeeded better than any other ruler in reconciling the various antagonistic races that inhabited his dominions, and inducing them to dwell together in concord. Yet he, who could do so much as a king for arbitration between other rulers, and the pacification of rival cities and provinces, seemed powerless as a father to allay the petty strife of his own household. While order was steadily maintained in the remotest parts of his kingdom, the centre of authority, the palace in which he dwelt, became a scene of confusion and anarchy. In short, there broke out among the palace servants who became the adherents of his rival sons what amounted to a veritable civil war. Had the contending parties stood up in opposing ranks and hurled javelins at each other, he would have known how to deal with them, and might have succeeded in arresting their strife; but the war which raged between them was of a more subtle and puzzling nature; the weapons of destruction which they made use of were lies: he who desired to slay one with whom he was at enmity accused him of some treasonable plot, and so endeavoured to get him sentenced to death. A considerable number of the palace servants were by such base unscrupulous means tried, tortured, condemned, and brought to execution. There was a reign of terror among them similar to that which prevailed on a larger



scale in the French Revolution; no one felt sure of his safety, and some resolved to be beforehand in accusing their fellows through fear of being accused themselves. The king, who resembled Solomon in some things, had none of that ruler's renowned sagacity as a sifter of testimony, for he was easily imposed upon when any charges were craftily made which seemed to confirm his suspicions. As it happened long afterwards, in the persecution of the Jews, the witchcraft cases, the Popish plots, and other similar trials, he condemned to death a number of calumniated people, not at all from cruelty but from ignorant credulity.

53. Herod's domestics not only accused one another of being implicated in treasonable plots, but made similar charges against the sons of Mariamne, when it was well known that they were living at enmity with their father, and had consequently become objects of suspicion. He treated most of these charges as doubtful or frivolous, but at length a foul story was told by three of the palace eunuchs respecting the designs of Alexander, which he was so far disposed to give credit to that he placed that son under arrest. The young prince, instead of simply maintaining his innocence, as an upright and truthful man would have done, answered the accusation brought against him by trumping up some monstrous counter-charges against those whom he considered his chief opponents. He wrote to his father four letters, declaring that he had certainly conspired against him, and had as confederates in the plot not only Pheroras and Salome, but the ministers Ptolemy and Sappinius, the most trusted advisers of the king. Herod had been much worried and perplexed by the conflicting reports which he heard, and it was now the object of Alexander to confuse him still more, and make all his subjects seem equally traitors, or all

stories of treason appear equally untrue. The prince's father-in-law, Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, at length came to Jerusalem to learn more of the serious charge which was advanced against him, and assist Herod in composing his family dissensions. He seems to have proved a shrewd and clever mediator, and to have succeeded admirably in calming the exacerbated feelings of father and son, and restoring harmony between them. We cannot help, however, suspecting some portion of the masterly mediation of Archelaus to be nothing but an invention of the Jewish historian. The position of the two young princes was this:—Neither their uncle and aunt, nor the ministers, Ptolemy and Sappinius, could have had, at first, any reason to be ill-disposed towards them, nor is it likely that they would have subsequently turned against them but for their own foolish and disloyal conduct. Yet to make matters worse, to alienate them still further, Alexander grossly libels them in four letters which he writes to the king. One would have thought that, under these circumstances, Archelaus, in coming to effect a reconciliation, would, as the first and chief step, have required his son-in-law to humbly beg pardon of the relatives and ministers that he had thus unscrupulously wronged. So far, however, from asking the reprobate prince to apologise to the four influential persons whom he had defamed, Archelaus very adroitly, by some magical process, transfers the guilt from him to them, so that the calumniated become calumniators! And he actually fastens on Pheroras as the most guilty, and exerts such a marvellous influence over him that he is presently compelled to kneel before the king in mourning garments, and confess himself to be the chief cause of all the mischief; “When he had persuaded him to this he gained his point with both parties, and the calumnies raised against the young

men were, beyond all expectation, removed" (Ant., xvi. viii. 6).

54. Herod had now for the second time become reconciled to his rebellious sons by the mediation of a common friend, but it was not long before the interposition of mischievous people again set them at variance. If we are to credit the prejudiced representation of Josephus, the Jews of the Asmonean faction, Herod's inveterate enemies, acted all along the part of quiet loyal men, and those who effected the estrangement between him and the princes were chiefly Idumeans and Greeks. One Eurycles, a Lacedemonian adventurer, arrived in Judea, and being informed of the dissensions which existed in the king's family, managed to worm himself into the confidence of both Antipater and his rival brothers, and by going from one to the other, artfully worked on their jealousies, and inflamed their minds with evil reports. We are told that this foreign intriguer even imposed on the two kings, Herod and Archelaus, and obtained from them large sums of money as a remuneration for his services, but the statement scarcely seems entitled to belief. It is further said that there came into Judea at this period another Greek, Euaratus of Cos, one of Alexander's most intimate friends, and that when Herod questioned him respecting the things of which Alexander was accused, "he assured him, upon oath, that he had never heard of such things from the young men, yet did this testimony avail nothing for clearing them. Herod was only disposed to hearken readily to what was said against them, and every one was most agreeable to him who believed in their guilt" (War, i. xxvi. 5). "As to Herod, he was now come to such a pass as to hate them himself, and to urge men to speak against them whether they would or not. He observed all that was said, and put

questions, and hearkened to every one who spoke to their prejudice, till at length he learnt that Euaratus of Cos was a conspirator with Alexander, and this was to him the most satisfactory news imaginable" (Ant., xvi. x. 2).

55. Josephus would thus make it appear that Herod, after having laboured incessantly for the welfare of his two most favoured sons, and repeatedly pardoned their offences, now suddenly, and without any good reason, turned against them in a spiteful manner, and endeavoured by all means in his power to hurry them on to destruction. This representation is clearly untruthful; the king had not made the wisest and most hopeful arrangement for reclaiming his sons, but there is abundant proof in the narrative that he sincerely wished to effect a reconciliation with them, and treat them as his undoubted successors, so long as it seemed possible to do so. Many falsehoods may have been circulated about the young princes, just as they started calumnies themselves, but beneath the thick cloud of aspersion there was, in respect to what was said of their persistent enmity and disloyalty to their father, a good substratum of truth. And Herod, when he had borne a great deal from them, and had made repeated efforts to gain their affection, but all to no purpose, was at length thoroughly provoked by their stubborn behaviour, and began to regard them as intractable enemies. The king had in his service two body guards, Jucundus and Tyrannus, who, on being found guilty of some misconduct were dismissed from the palace in disgrace. No good and faithful son would think of patronising his father's unfaithful and discarded servants, but it was soon observed that the two guards, whom Herod had cast off, were taken into the employ of Alexander, and treated by him with unusual generosity. This circumstance excited a suspicion



that they were engaged for treasonable purposes, and on being arrested and subjected to the barbarous and unreliable means then resorted to for extorting criminal secrets, they confessed that they had been persuaded to kill the king while he was out hunting wild beasts. They also showed where money was hidden in a stable underground, and accused the commander of the fortress of Alexandrium of being collegued with the princes in their plot to seize on the government. "The commander was arrested and tortured, under the charge of having promised to receive the young men into the fortress and supply them with the money lodged there. He could not be got to confess this, but his son came in and said it was so, and delivered up a paper which seemed to be in Alexander's handwriting, and ran as follows: 'When we have finished, by God's help, all that we propose to do, we will come to you; and do your best, as you have promised, to receive us into your fortress.' On this document being produced, Herod had no doubt of his sons' treacherous designs against him. But Alexander said that Diophantus, the scribe, had imitated his hand, and that the paper was maliciously drawn up by Antipater" (Ant., xvi. x. 4).

56. Like their mother, Mariamne, the young princes, under the influence of evil counsel, hated their father, collegued with his enemies, and longed for his death, but they were not so wicked as to actually conspire to effect his removal by violent means. What Jucundus and Tyrannus said to incriminate them, was evidently a fabrication; for men of that stamp, when under torture, would say anything which seemed likely to confirm the suspicions of the examiners and procure their own release. The paper found at the fortress of Alexandrium, must have been introduced there by some secret enemy of the princes, who was desirous by

such means to strengthen the apparent evidence of their guilt, but what ground was there for asserting that enemy to be Antipater? Had Alexander simply declared the document to be a forgery, artfully designed to incriminate him, he would have taken up a sound position of defence, and been entitled to honest sympathy. But he had a vicious habit of meeting one false charge by advancing another, as when he made a random accusation of treason against Pheroras, Salome, and the ministers Ptolemy and Sappinius. Even if he suspected Antipater of drawing up the forged document, he was not, on the strength of those private suspicions, justified in openly accusing his brother of such villainy. By throwing out rash accusations against people in this fashion, he could not fail to make himself hated and feared, and in short was doing all that was possible to bring about his own condemnation. At the same time, he strengthened the hatred which existed among his own partisans against Antipater; and the subsequent charges of having "murdered his brethren," which were raised against that unfortunate prince by those who, filled with a spirit of vengeance, were thirsting for his blood, undoubtedly obtained much of their credence from Alexander's worthless authority.

57. When the two princes, with Jucundus and Tyrannus, were taken to Jericho at Herod's command, the multitude there became greatly excited about the matter, and presently stoned the accusers to death. There were probably two opposing parties on this occasion, since we are told that it was only with great difficulty that the princes themselves were soon after delivered from the same fate by the interposition of Pheroras and Ptolemy. They were now put under guard, kept in strict custody, and treated in much the same manner as condemned criminals. Aristobulus, the least suspected of the

two, instead of doing what he could in a straightforward manner to establish his innocence, endeavoured by the most reckless mendacity to set other relatives against his father by making them apprehensive of falling under his punishment. He told Salome, his mother-in-law, to look out for her safety, since she had been accused of betraying important state secrets by her former lover, Sylleus, the Arabian, and the king was in consequence preparing to put her to death. Salome at once acquainted Herod with this private warning which she had received, and he thereupon became greatly exasperated, had the young princes separated one from the other, and bade them each write down a confession of their treasonable designs. They complied with this request, and wrote saying, that they had formed no designs against their father, but, being weary of their condition, had resolved to get away from the country. Soon after, there came to Jerusalem from the king of Cappadocia an ambassador, named Melas, and Herod in his presence asked Alexander to what country they intended to fly. Alexander replied that he and his brother had arranged to proceed to Cappadocia, and that king Archelaus had promised to send them on from there to Rome. Archelaus, however, on being communicated with, declared that he had not promised to send the princes to Cæsar, but had simply engaged to receive them, if it might be for their advantage, and that without any ill-will to Herod. Alexander further stated, that it was their wish that their accusers, Tyrannus and Jucundus, should have been examined more strictly, but Antipater, fearing that their innocence would so be established, had those accusers suddenly slain, by placing his friends among the multitude for that purpose. There is, however, little doubt that these men were really slain by partisans of the accused

princes ; Antipater would have been very unlikely to order their removal from any fear that their further examination would be prejudicial to his interests, and, even if he had done so, Alexander, in his position could have obtained no evidence of it, and must therefore have made this charge against his rival brother, just as he advanced other reckless charges, wholly from conjecture.

58. "Herod sent Volumnius, the commander of his army, to Cæsar, together with his friend Olympus, and they carried with them the charges which were made against his sons in writing. On arriving in Rome and delivering these documents, Cæsar was greatly distressed at the sad case of the young men, yet did not think that he had any right to deprive the father of his power of condemning them. So he wrote back, giving him full authority to deal with them as he pleased, but said that he would do well to have them tried in a public court, before a general council of his own kindred, and the governors of the province. Then, if they should be found guilty, he might put them to death ; but, if it should appear that they only meditated flight to escape his authority, it would be proper to inflict a more moderate punishment. In accordance with these instructions, Herod went to Berytus, and there assembled the court. The governors, with Saturninus and the other legates, presided, agreeably to Cæsar's injunction. With these, also, was the procurator Volumnius ; next, the king's kindred and friends, Salome also and Pheroras, and, after them, the chief men of Syria, with the exception of king Archelaus, who, as Alexander's father-in-law, was regarded by Herod with distrust. With crafty precaution he avoided also producing his sons before the court, being well aware that their appearance would have excited universal compassion, and that, should they be permitted to speak, Alex-



ander would easily rebut the charges. They were, therefore, detained in custody at Platane, a village of the Sidonians. The king, rising from his seat, arraigned them as if they were present. He urged but faintly the charge of their having plotted against his life, from their being insufficient evidence; but their invectives, jests, insults, and a thousand like offences towards him, more grievous even than death, he fully laid before the court. No one contradicting him, he called on them severally to give their votes; lamenting that, while achieving a bitter triumph over his sons, he would himself be the victim. Saturninus first delivered his sentence condemning the young men, but not to death, declaring that it would be wrong for him, who had three sons present, to condemn to death the children of another. The two legates concurred in this decision, and there were some others who followed their example. Volumnius was the first to recommend the severest punishment, and all those who voted after him condemned the young men to death, some out of flattery and some out of hatred to Herod, but none from indignation at their crimes" (War, i. xxvii. 1-3).

59. After the princes were thus condemned to death by a court of one hundred and fifty councillors, headed by the president of Syria, Josephus informs us that there were further partisan quarrels respecting them among the multitude. "Tero, an old soldier, had a son who was in great favour with the condemned prince, Alexander. And this soldier, on hearing of the decision of the court, was nearly distracted, crying aloud, as he went about, that justice and truth were trampled under foot, and nature confounded. At length he ventured into the presence of the king, and said, 'Truly, I think you a miserable man in hearkening to wicked wretches against those who ought to be most precious in

your sight. For you have frequently resolved that Pheroras and Salome should be put to death, and yet believe them now against your sons; while, by cutting these off from the succession, and leaving all to Antipater, they will have you entirely in their power. Consider whether this death of his brethren will not make Antipater hated by the soldiers, for there is nobody that does not commiserate the young men, and many of the captains show their indignation at it openly.' After saying this, he named those that had such indignation; but the king ordered all of them, together with Tero and his son, to be arrested immediately. Then a certain barber, called Trypho, leaped forth from among the people, and said, 'This Tero tried to persuade me that, while I shaved you, I should seize the opportunity to cut your throat, and promised that, for so doing, Alexander would reward me. Herod, on hearing this, examined Tero, with his son and the barber, by the torture. The two former having denied the charge, and the latter saying nothing further, the king ordered that Tero should be racked more severely, at which the son, wishing to save his father from further suffering, promised to make a full disclosure. He then told the king that his father, at the persuasion of Alexander, had intended to assassinate him. Some said that this was a fabrication to save his father from the torture, while others affirmed that it was true. The king, having in a public assembly accused the officers and Tero, brought the people together in a body against them, and they and the barber, Trypho, were assailed and beaten to death with bludgeons and stones. He afterwards sent his condemned sons to Sebaste, where they were strangled; and he commanded that they should be buried beside their ancestors in the fortress of Alexandrium'' (War, i. xxvii. 4-6).

60. Josephus next proceeds to set before the world his own judgment of this sad case in the following terms:—"And now, perhaps, it may seem to some unreasonable that hatred should so increase on both sides as to overcome nature. Can it be laid to the charge of the young men that they provoked their father to do what he did, and, by going on long in the same way, put things past remedy? Or, is it to be laid to the father's charge that he was so hard-hearted and greedy of government and other things that contributed to his glory, that he would take no one into partnership with him, nor suffer any interference with his work? Or is it to be supposed that human actions are determined beforehand by an inevitable necessity which we call Fate? Admitting this sad event to proceed from voluntary causes, some people may be disposed to blame the young men, who, influenced by youthful vanity and pride of royal birth, listened to the calumnies that were raised against their father. And, certainly they were not equitable judges of his actions, for they were ill-natured in suspecting, and intemperate in speaking about them, and, consequently, afforded a ready handle for their enemies. But the horrid impiety of which their father was guilty cannot be thought worthy of excuse. For, without any certain evidence of their treacherous designs against him, he ventured to kill his own sons, who were of very comely bodies, and the darlings of other men. They were, moreover, expert in hunting and in martial exercises, and were skilful in oratory—especially the eldest, Alexander. And, though he had condemned them, it would surely have been sufficient punishment to imprison them for life, or banish them far away from his dominions, since he was surrounded by the Roman forces, and his government was secure. Then to kill them as he did, on the sudden, in order to gratify

a passion that governed him, was a proof of extreme impiety. He was, also, guilty of so great a crime in his older age; nor will the delays that he made in proceeding against his sons, nor the time that elapsed before they were condemned, plead at all in his excuse. For it often happens that a man is suddenly excited to do some wicked act, but to commit a crime deliberately, after frequent attempts and postponements—to undertake it at last and accomplish it—is the act of a murderous mind resolute in the pursuit of evil” (Ant., xvi. xi. 8).

61. The Jewish historian thus represents that Herod, in prosecuting his sons for treason by the permission of Cæsar, and under the authority of the president of Syria, was guilty of the foul crime of murdering them. And so far from giving the king any credit for having repeatedly pardoned their offences and manifested great reluctance to punish them, in the hope of seeing their amendment, he makes out that this slowness to strike only tells further against him, and demonstrates his deliberate persistence in an evil course! He knew, well enough, that it was customary with Jewish parents to deliver up a stubborn and rebellious son to be stoned to death in accordance with the law (Deut. xxi. 18-20); and that no parent proceeding against his son in this legal fashion, and submitting the case to the judgment of others, would be held guilty of any crime, even if somewhat hard-hearted and severe. When the trial of the young men was going on before the council of Berytus, Herod expressly mentioned this law, and showed that he did not choose to take advantage of it, as he otherwise might have done, if he had been eager for his sons' condemnation (Ant., xvi. xi. 2). Although far from blameless in the unseemly conflict which he waged against them, he was not the aggressor, and certainly not the most deserving of censure. He was,



perhaps, chiefly culpable in respect to their education; they were brought up luxuriously, and not industriously, as he himself had been reared; they were encouraged to rely on their birth and high rank, rather than to depend on their own exertions. Then, knowing how intensely he was hated by the Asmonean faction, and how the quarrel arose with Mariamne, he might naturally expect that those who sympathised with her would try to incite against him her sons, and he took no adequate steps to prevent this by surrounding them with loyal men. He further showed, as in the case of Mariamne, a great want of judicious arrangement in his domestic rule, by keeping the contentious members of his family shut up together in the royal palace, with little else to do but indulge in gossip and scandal, when they ought to have been widely separated and usefully employed. If the king's half-Asmonean sons had only been well trained, they might have turned out good men, and been a comfort to his old age and a blessing to the country. But, when once they got into the hands of evil counsellors, and were hopelessly corrupted and unfitted to govern the kingdom—were, in fact, circulating mischievous falsehoods, and making preparations for a civil war—he did not do very wrong in resolving painfully to sacrifice them, just as he might have cut off a diseased limb for the saving of his life.

62. No doubt many of Herod's friends, while fully convinced that the princes were guilty of rebellion, would have been glad to see their lives spared. Josephus contends that "it would surely have been sufficient punishment to imprison them for life, or banish them." But this could not have been done with safety to the nation, unless they had completely changed their conduct, and publicly renounced for ever all claim to the succession. They would not have been rendered harmless,

whether in prison or in banishment, with a disaffected party constantly plotting for their release, or anxiously awaiting their return. Indeed, they wanted to get away themselves: they were eager to go to Cappadocia, or elsewhere, that they might escape their father's supervision, and conspire with more freedom to overthrow his government. Cæsar could have saved their lives, if he had been disposed to do so; and he might perhaps have sent them to Gaul or some other Western province, as he afterwards banished Archelaus, and thus have got them away beyond the reach of their partisans. It was necessary that they should be prevented by some means from creating more strife, and causing more blood to flow; and as Cæsar alone had the power of arresting their mischief by any expedient short of death, yet did not devise a lighter punishment, he must be considered more responsible than Herod for their execution. Only Cæsar could have insured them a fair trial at Berytus; unless he had interposed and arranged the proceedings, strict impartiality in their treatment at this period would have been impossible. When seditious leaders place themselves at the head of a revolutionary faction, and are at length arrested and imprisoned, they cannot expect to be dealt with by the government they sought to overthrow as they would be by an independent authority. Those who sit in judgment on them will be likely to say: "We know that our vanquished enemies are guilty; let us, therefore, accuse them in due form, and condemn them to death."

63. In a simple quarrel of individuals, such as that between a private man and his son, it is not very difficult to apportion the fault of the contending parties; but where a king and his son are at variance, they generally represent opposing factions; their strife is of the nature of a war, and

the blame of having caused it will often have to be shared by many. Herod's two rebellious sons would, in all probability, have proved obedient and tractable enough if the family had been in a private position. But it so happened that he was king of Judea, and a strong party of Jews, who disapproved of his policy, endeavoured by all possible means to communicate their discontent to the young princes who were expected to succeed him, in the hope that their accession to power would bring about a complete change in the government. These young men thus became the tools of a faction; their minds were artfully inflamed against the king, their father; and when he thought to humble them and bring them to their senses, they were not allowed to kiss the rod, and by more dutiful conduct seek reconciliation with him, but were pushed on to further rebellion. And while the sons were thus incited by seditious people against their father, he was being urged on by another party to deal more severely with them. He had made what he considered an equitable compromise, by which Antipater and they should reign after him in succession. But Pheroras, Ptolemy, Sappinius, and the other friends of Antipater, knew well that this arrangement, if respected during the king's lifetime, would be speedily set aside after his death by the partisans of the sons of Mariamne, who were determined to maintain the priority of the claims of Alexander. A civil war was thus seen to be impending, and how was it possible to be averted but by getting rid of those rival claimants of the throne? If the king had been asked to disinherit them and banish them from the country in the interests of peace, he would not have been likely to comply with such a harsh request. Nor is it probable that he would have been willing to have them tried simply as stubborn and rebellious

sons, if strongly urged to take such a course. The only way to incite him wrathfully against them, and induce him at length to desire their death, as others did, was to fill him with apprehension for his personal safety, by making it appear that they were plotting to effect his assassination. Stratagems to impose on him in this way were practised with success, as the narrative shows ; but we have no means of discovering precisely who were implicated in these attempts, nor of measuring the extent of their guilt. There were scores of palace servants—men of the stamp of Trypho, the barber, and Diophantus, the scribe—capable of concerting together, and getting up fictitious evidence against the princes ; but it is very improbable that Antipater or any of his principal friends stooped to such trickery as the opposite faction all along suspected and ventured to assert. They may have connived at it to a certain extent, and it would be surprising if they did not, seeing that they were both calumniated and threatened by the sons of Mariamne ; and even those who really advanced false charges against those dangerous revolutionists, were doing nothing worse than fighting them with their own weapons.

64. Herod would have gladly shrunk from the impeachment and condemnation of his rebellious sons, only that he saw no other way of averting greater troubles. In sending the wretched princes to execution, he entertained no resentment against them, and manifested the kindest disposition towards their orphan children, when he endeavoured, by further espousals, to heal the divisions of his family. We are told that he “got together his kindred and friends, and set before them the children, and, with his eyes full of tears, said thus to them : ‘It was a sad fate that took away from me these children’s fathers, and they are now recommended to me by the natural pity which their orphan con-



dition requires. Though I have been a most unfortunate father, I will endeavour to appear a better grandfather, and after my death will leave them to the guardianship of my nearest friends. I therefore betroth your daughter, Pheroras, to the elder of the sons of Alexander, that you may so feel constrained to take care of him. To your son, Antipater, I affiance the daughter of Aristobulus, that you may thus become a father of that orphan girl. And her sister my son, Herod Philip, shall take, he whose maternal grandfather was high-priest. Let those, therefore, who love me hold the same purpose, and I am persuaded that no friend of mine will abrogate this arrangement. And I pray God that he will join these children in marriage, for the advantage of my kingdom and my posterity, and may He look down upon them with greater serenity than He looked on their fathers !' While he spoke these words, he wept and joined the children's right hands together ; after which he embraced every one in a most affectionate manner, and dismissed the assembly" (War, i. xxviii. 2, 3).

65. David and many other kings besides Herod, have been compelled to contend against one or more rebellious sons through their being pushed into a position of rivalry by a hostile faction, impatient for a change in the government. The fatal strife between Peter the Great and his son Alexis bears, perhaps, in many respects, the most striking resemblance to that which we have now under consideration. Peter was an earnest reformer ; he laboured assiduously to introduce into Russia the ideas, customs, and civilisation of the West, and by so doing rendered himself obnoxious to the hostility of the old Russian party, headed by a bigoted priesthood. His wife, the Princess Eudoxia, a daughter of an ancient house, had been educated

in all the prejudices of her country ; and not sympathising with her husband's reforms, nor even comprehending them, she allied herself with the party that did all in their power to thwart and oppose his designs. She was taught by her confessor to regard all innovations as so many sacrileges, and every foreigner as a corrupter of her husband, and a pest to the land. After many quarrels with his uncongenial spouse, the Czar at length divorced her, yet permitted her to have the guardianship of their infant son, Alexis, and this proved for the child a serious misfortune. The young prince fell into the hands of the priests, who taught him that his mother was greatly wronged, that his father's reforms were wicked, and that he should prepare to abrogate them as soon as he had the opportunity. When he arrived at the age of twenty, the Czar discovered the mischief which had been wrought upon him, and thought to correct it by sending him to travel abroad, and marrying him to an intelligent German princess. But it was now too late to effect any beneficial change on his mind; he ill-treated his wife, and was constantly engaged in idle and dissolute pursuits, or in conspiring with his father's enemies. Peter at length wrote a severe letter to him, which concluded with these words : " I will still wait a little while to see if you reform yourself, and, if not, I will cut you off from the succession as we amputate a useless member. Do not imagine that I mean only to frighten you, nor rely upon your being my only son ; for, if I spare not my own life for my country and the good of my people, how shall I spare you ? I would rather leave my kingdom to a foreigner who deserved it than to an unworthy son." Alexis had occasional fits of penitence, but they did not last long, and in order to escape from his father's authority, and more effectually plot against his

government, he at length borrowed money, fled the country, and got away to the court of Vienna. The Emperor of Germany refused to shelter him; the Czar sent messengers in pursuit of him, who presently overtook him at Naples, and brought him back in custody to Moscow. He was now publicly disinherited, tortured to elicit from him a confession of guilt, tried before a national council for conspiracy against his father, and condemned to death. The unhappy prince died in prison before the sentence of the court could be carried out, but many of his associates, including fifty priests and monks, were executed; while Moscow was kept for some time in a state of siege, and the citizens had to act as spies and informers on each other. Much blame has been attached to the Czar Peter for his severe measures, and a great deal has also been said in the way of apology for him. We should not like to pass an uncharitable judgment on such a ruler, but in respect to the treatment of his son, and his son's partisans, he seems to have been, on the whole, a man of harder and sterner disposition than Herod (*see* Lardner's History of Russia; Murray's Memoir of Peter the Great, &c.).

66. Reformers are sometimes found in a humble position, where they can do very little towards the realisation of their ideas and the execution of their hopeful designs. They see clearly that certain measures which they suggest would be productive of vast benefit to the community, but cannot get other people to see with them, reason and argue as they may for that purpose. Conservative prejudice will be strongly arrayed against them, or they will meet with apathy and indifference in every direction, or get laughed at and treated contemptuously as visionaries. Herod and Peter had the good fortune to escape such disparagement, just because they held in their respective countries a position of

mastership, so that what they proposed in the way of improvement they were able forthwith to accomplish. It was not necessary for them to go about earnestly pleading in behalf of far-sighted plans to get prejudiced people to entertain their views; they had only to give the word of command as a captain might do, and men obeyed them. There was much grumbling and discontent on the part of narrow-minded, bigoted factions, who wished to maintain the old crooked order of things, but these obstructives had to give way or suffer worse. The reforming sovereigns had constantly in view the good of the community, the advancement of the public welfare; though they blundered to some extent, they were so strongly convinced that their general policy would prove beneficial, that ignorant obstruction annoyed them, and they had no hesitation to sacrifice among other opponents their own refractory offspring. It was well for Peter that there were more enlightened and appreciative people than Russian monks and priests to record his life-work; whereas the story of Herod has come down to us only through the hands of his prejudiced sacerdotal enemies.



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE ANTIPATER PLOT.

1. The enemies of Antipater. 3. He was wrongly supposed to have effected the ruin of his brethren. 5. Reasons for inciting his father against him. 6. The various charges made against Herod's relatives of seeking to kill him by poison. 7. It was seen that by similar devices he might be brought to suspect Antipater. 8. The friendly meetings of Antipater and Pheroras. 9. The wife of Pheroras and the Pharisees. 11. Death of Pheroras and opening of the plot against Antipater. 13. The wife and servants of Pheroras examined. 16. They easily impose on the king. 17. Antipater's former servants drawn into the conspiracy. 18. Forged letters procured from Rome. 19. The evidence of character. 20. Antipater leaves Rome and returns to Jerusalem. 22. Is tried before Varus on a charge of parricide. 23. Herod's harshness towards him. 24. The defence which he makes. 25. Speech of Nicolaus of Damascus. 27. Character of accusing witnesses. 28. Further attempts to incriminate Antipater with forged letters. 30. His honesty and simplicity manifested. 31. It was to his interest to prolong his father's life. 32. Herod's successive blunders. 33. His last illness and death. 34. The enemies of Antipater contrive to get him slain in prison. 35. Augustus partly responsible for his fate. 36. Remarks on other fictitious plots and conspiracies. 37. Justice for the martyred Prince Antipater. 38. Final estimate of the character of Herod.

**A**FTER giving an account of the trial and execution of the sons of Mariamne, and charging Herod with their wilful and deliberate murder, the Jewish historian proceeds to make another caluminated person—Herod's eldest son—entirely answerable for their death. He tells us that “an intolerable hatred fell upon Antipater from the nation, though he had now an undisputed title to the succession, for everybody knew that he was the

contriver of all the calumnies against his brethren. He was seized, moreover, with the deepest alarm when he beheld growing up the offspring of those murdered kinsmen—for Alexander had two sons by Glaphyra, Tigranes and Alexander—while Aristobulus had by Berenice three sons and two daughters—Herod, Agrippa, Aristobulus, Herodias, and Mariamne. After the execution of Alexander, Herod sent Glaphyra back with her dower to Cappadocia. Berenice, the widow whom Aristobulus left, he espoused to Antipater's maternal uncle, a match negotiated by Antipater in order to conciliate Salome, with whom he was at variance. He also gained the favour of Pheroras and of Cæsar's friends by presents and various attentions, sending a considerable sum of money to Rome. The president Saturninus, also, and those of his command in Syria, obtained from him a profusion of gifts. Yet the more he gave the more he was hated, since it was known that he bestowed so many presents not from generosity but from fear. And while the objects of his favour entertained for him no greater regard, those whom he overlooked were induced to hold him in deeper detestation than ever. The presents that he distributed became daily more costly when he saw the king, contrary to the hopes which he had cherished, taking charge of the orphans, and evincing his remorse for the murdered parents by compassion for their offspring" (War, i. xxviii. 1).

2. We are further told that Antipater disapproved of the espousals which the king had made for the orphan children, and persuaded him at length to alter them in such a way that they would be less likely to become formidable as rival claimants of the throne. This is quite probable; for it is just what any sensible man in such circumstances might be expected to do. Antipater could

not hope to reign securely if the rival princes who were growing up about him should have the support of powerful relations, who might at some future time become his enemies. It needed but little forethought to see, that for his interests, already sufficiently threatened, a more politic arrangement was desirable, and the king consented that his son should have the daughter of Pheroras, who had been first given to the son of Alexander. It might also be expected that Antipater would inherit his father's liberality, and would seek, by scattering presents with a free hand, to make as many friends as possible, and thus further strengthen his position. His Jewish enemies, who received nothing from him, would, in their jealous resentment, be sure to ascribe the gifts which he bestowed on others to bad motives, just as they did in the case of Herod's benefactions. But, in behaving handsomely to his uncle Pheroras, as well as to Saturninus and other distinguished Romans, he could not possibly have been influenced by fear, seeing that they had voted against his rivals, the sons of Mariamne, and were certain to be attached to his interests. No sensible Roman could regard his succession to the government with disfavour, for he was known to be more dependent on Cæsar's support, and more likely to be faithful to the imperial connexion, than those princes who had Asmonean blood in their veins, and were consequently popular with the disaffected Jews. And not only the Romans, but the whole Gentile population of Palestine, had good reason to view with satisfaction the prospect of his coming to the throne in preference to his misguided brethren who were condemned to death at Berytus. The statement, that the hatred of the nation fell on him immediately after their death, is entirely false, for, in reality, he had then few enemies besides the Jews of the Asmonean faction, who equally hated

his father Herod. As he never had so good opportunities as the sons of Mariamne to make the acquaintance of the army, a portion of the soldiers were naturally prepossessed in their favour. His aunt Salome had some little spite against him, as had also the minister Nicolaus of Damascus, but no good, satisfactory reason was given for their antagonism, and they were probably set against him by the artifice of calumniators.

3. When Antipater was cast off with his poor mother, and sent into exile to make room for the sons of Mariamne, he would naturally feel, like his great progenitor, Esau, that he had been unjustly deprived of his birthright. Yet he, a spirited young man in the prime of life, bowed humbly to his father's authority, and bore his undeserved degradation for something like twenty years with exemplary patience. He was only permitted to visit Jerusalem at the time of the great festivals, but neither then, nor on any other occasion, did he plot against those who had supplanted him; whereas, if there had been Asmonean blood in his veins, he would have hatched insurrections and conspiracies continually, and gone nearly mad with revenge. When, in consequence of the perverse and refractory behaviour of the sons of Mariamne, he was at length brought back to court, and treated as a possible successor to the throne, there was nothing to reproach him with; no one ventured to say at that period, that he had obtained his advancement by intrigue. And, as Herod had other sons to rely on, we may rest assured that he then bore a blameless character, or his recall, and promotion, and high recommendation to the court of Rome would never have been thought of. But the sudden elevation had its drawbacks; he was thus very much like a politician of the present day who emerges from respectable obscurity to be a candi-



date for the American Presidency: he at once became the chief target of partisan abuse, and was represented as the greatest villain that ever lived. All that was done by unscrupulous people to the prejudice of the sons of Mariamne was supposed to be of his contriving, and he was looked upon as a perpetual calumniator and worker of mischief. We are told how "every evil report that was spread abroad against them came from him, while he avoided himself the suspicion," and that even when sent on his first mission to Rome where he gained the good opinion of Cæsar, "he was grieved that he was not at home and had proper opportunities of calumniating his brethren" (Ant., xvi. iv. 1).

4. Even if Antipater had been the abandoned wretch that his political enemies endeavoured to make him appear, he could not possibly have contrived all the evil against the sons of Mariamne which they persisted in fathering on him. Their own folly and indiscretion had sufficiently ruined the prospects of those young men before he, as a rival, was introduced on the stage. He was dragged like a poor soldier into an arena of strife, which was none of his seeking; he simply acted according to his father's instruction, and had far more reason to complain of his much favoured and contumacious brethren than they of him. Contrast his own patient behaviour in adversity with that of his younger rivals. They had not to submit to the degradation which had been his lot; they were not banished from Jerusalem, nor entirely cut off from the succession, but only had to give him precedence. And, as he had never conspired against them when they were advanced over his head, now that there was brought about a reversal of their respective ranks, he had surely a right to expect that they would submit themselves in turn, and behave towards him with a corresponding loyalty. But

stimulated by the pride of royal blood, and the encouragement of evil counsellors, the new arrangement, brought about by their own bad conduct, was regarded by them as a flagrant injustice. They rebelled against their father's decision, looked on Antipater as their chief enemy, and were determined, if possible, to supplant him a second time and seize on the government by force. Then, because he, as in duty bound, warned his father of the designs of their partisans, and in concert with Pheroras and other friends, took reasonable precaution to safeguard his rights in the face of their determined hostility, he must needs be accused of wickedly conspiring against his brethren and plotting their destruction.

5. When brought back to court as a check to the sons of Mariamne, Antipater had a most difficult and ungracious part to act, and all the Jews of the Asmonean faction would have been sure to hate and calumniate him, even if he had been the most upright man in the world. It was a mortifying reflection to them that their persistent plotting and intriguing against the king had ended in failure, had produced results exactly the opposite of what they expected and desired. Those relatives of royal blood, whom they preferred before him and incited against him, had been sacrificed one after another, and they could now no longer hope for a change of government even at his death, for Antipater presented himself as a second Herod, who would be certain to continue in the same course. It was useless to stir up such a prince against his father in order to obtain with his speedy accession to power the alterations which they desired; if any further strife could be kindled in the royal household for their advantage, the father must be incited against the son. But had they gone to Herod and candidly declared their inmost thoughts—told him that they hated Anti-

pater, regarded him as the calumniator and murderer of his brethren, and hoped that he would after all not be permitted to have the succession—they would have been looked upon as disaffected and seditious people, and would perhaps have suffered punishment. In order to induce the king to give serious attention to an impeachment of his son, it was desirable to put on a cloak of loyalty, and pretend to be apprehensive for his own personal safety. It was well known that a little artifice on the part of domestics had made him distrust his late sons, had brought him even to suspect that they had designs on his life, and they were encouraged to believe that such means would now serve equally well to turn him against Antipater. Moreover, as this prince was supposed to be the chief contriver of the fictitious evidence which served to incriminate his brethren, they naturally thought that if he could only be caught himself and made fast in a network of lies, he would be overtaken with a well-deserved retribution.

6. We have abundant reason to consider Herod a frank, honest, straightforward ruler, but in his palace at Jerusalem he was a credulous lion surrounded by foxes; most of the people about him, especially his domestics, were full of cunning trickery, and seem to have had an utter disregard for truth. When a quarrel arose, and they became divided into hostile parties, they had not the slightest hesitation to manufacture atrocious charges for the purpose of getting their opponents condemned to death. And both the king and his ministers were easily imposed upon by such accusations, having apparently no notion of estimating people's characters and motives, nor any better means of sifting truth from falsehood in the testimony submitted to them, than by the barbarous and unreliable expedient of torture. One of his weak points was well

known to his enemies: he was extremely apprehensive of being poisoned, owing probably to the fact of his father having been murdered by such means. To any story that a similar attempt was being made on his own life, he was always inclined to give a credulous ear. He had already been led by accusers on three different occasions to entertain unreasonable fears of his nearest relatives. We are told that "while the queen was still living, Pheroras had been accused as if he were in a plot to poison Herod, and there came such a number of informers that the king, though the most affectionate of brothers, was induced to credit their statements and to entertain fears. And when he had brought many of those that were under suspicion to the torture, he came at last to the friends of Pheroras, none of whom distinctly confessed the plot, but they owned that he had made preparation to take the woman whom he loved and run away to the Parthians" (War, i. xxiv. 6). When a serious quarrel arose between him and Mariamne, some of her domestics accused her of preparing a deadly potion for him, and he was quite disposed to believe all that they said. At a later period, when her two refractory sons were suspected of plotting against him, and Alexander was accused by a poor wretch under torture of having a poison prepared for him at Ascalon, he gave so much credit to the statement as to make an ineffectual search for the draught (Ant., xvi. viii. 5).

7. As the king had thus been led by a little concerted trickery to suspect three of his relatives of plotting to poison him, certain Jews of the Asmonean faction would naturally feel encouraged to turn his suspicions, by such means, against Antipater. And as this prince had more enemies than any other member of the royal family who had been so accused, his guilt, under these circumstances, would be all the more readily believed by the



prejudiced multitude. Even some, who had too much sagacity to be imposed upon by stratagems of this kind, might pretend to be convinced by them, with the view to prevent him from having the succession. The knowledge that he had become obnoxious to a large section of the Jewish people, and was on that account not likely to settle down very securely on his father's throne, may have helped to turn against him the able minister Nicolaus of Damascus, who was foremost in advocating the claims of Archelaus. At any rate, this influential man played a very similar part to that of Shaftesbury in the Popish Plots; when calumnies were started against the heir to the throne by a low despicable class of people, he did not examine them with any great care as a man of his ability ought to have done, but accepted them readily, gave them every possible encouragement, and helped to get them credited by the king. And when the conspirators succeeded at length in rousing half the nation against the unfortunate prince, and bringing him to take his trial at Jerusalem on the charge of parricide, it was this practised orator who pleaded against him with the greatest bitterness, and contributed more than any one else to procure his condemnation.

8. The fact of Pheroras being accused, directly after his death, of plotting, conjointly with Antipater, to poison the king renders the pretended conspiracy all the more incredible. Herod had a genuine affection for all his brothers, and they appear to have been sincerely attached to him. Pheroras had also attained at his hands a high and honourable position as tetrarch, and thus owed him much gratitude. And it is clear that if he had been a wicked, thankless wretch, he could not hope to profit in any way by the death of his royal brother, but had every reason to apprehend that

the loss of his best friend would adversely affect his own fortunes. But he had taken a leading part in opposition to the sons of Mariamne, and was known to be a strong supporter of Antipater, and this was quite sufficient to make their vindictive partisans regard him with hatred, and calumniate him after his death. Like Herod, he had the misfortune to be married to a disloyal woman, who became the tool of those crafty and seditious people that were desirous to effect a change in the government. He was dotingly fond of this woman; but we cannot believe, as the prejudiced historian would have us do, that he was such a fool as to be carried away entirely by her influence, and brought to participate in her revolutionary designs. Antipater and he were accustomed to have friendly meetings, and their female relatives—that is, his wife, her sister and mother, and Doris, Antipater's mother—met at the same time, and formed together a little coterie of court gossips. Such a mixed company as theirs, while finding plenty of things to talk about, would be very unlikely to engage in a treasonable conspiracy; but it was afterwards imagined that they so conspired by Salome and others, who had a recollection of their meetings. The following account, which Josephus has given of those assemblies, was probably derived from Nicolaus of Damascus.

9. "The four women said one and the same thing, and Pheroras and Antipater differed from them only in points of small consequence. But Salome, the king's sister, was their opponent, and she closely watched their communion, and felt convinced that their friendship boded no good to Herod. Then they, knowing that they were suspected by her, contrived that their meetings should not be discovered, and they pretended to hate and abuse each other occasionally, and especially in the

presence of the king or any of his friends. But they could not by such means impose upon Salome, nor conceal from her their designs, for she searched into everything, and told her brother all about their artifices and their secret assemblies, which were evidently meant for his hurt. Now these women were got hold of by some of the sect of Pharisees, who prided themselves greatly in their knowledge of the Law, and pretended to be highly favoured of God. They were a crafty, intriguing sect, ever ready to kindle rebellion, and excite opposition to kings. When the Jews gave assurance of their good will to Cæsar and the king's government, more than six thousand of these men refused to take the oath of allegiance, and a fine was consequently imposed upon them, but it was paid for them by the wife of Pheroras. They were believed to have knowledge of future events by divine inspiration; and, to requite this kindness of hers, they said God had decreed that Herod's government should cease, and that the kingdom, instead of descending to his children, should come to her and Pheroras and their posterity. When Salome had learned all about these predictions, she at once informed the king, and told him also that they had completely turned the heads of some of the palace servants. The king, therefore, slew such of the Pharisees as were principally accused, and Bagoas, the eunuch, and Carus, a comely man, and one that was his companion. He slew also those of his household who had consented to what the Pharisees foretold. As for Bagoas, it was predicted that he should be the father and benefactor of the future king, and enable him, by miraculous power, to beget children" (Ant., xvii. ii. 4).

10. It thus appears that the wife of Pheroras and a few credulous domestics became the dupes of a party of seditious Pharisees who flattered them by

their soothsaying. But there is nothing to show that Pheroras, Antipater, and Doris shared her delusion, and were mixed up in this discreditable affair. They, at all events, believed in the Roman connexion, and were favourable to Herod's policy, which was totally opposed to the views and aspirations of the Pharisees. The king was needlessly alarmed and excited by his tale-bearing sister, who busied herself as a spy. If his domestics had simply been imposed upon by fortune-tellers, and had no worst offence to answer for, they were rather to be pitied than blamed, and therefore suffered a punishment much too severe. Even the impostors themselves were too hardly dealt with, although it was highly necessary that they should be as much as possible checked and discredited; for people of that class were constantly misleading the ignorant multitude by pretending to foresee future events, and they sometimes made prophecies of evil respecting individuals which, from being believed, actually brought about their own fulfilment. Herod was naturally very much exasperated at the foolish and seditious conduct of his brother's wife, and told Pheroras that if he desired to act as a brother, and continue in his friendship, he ought to give the woman a bill of divorcement. This Pheroras obstinately refused to do; he said that he would neither renounce his wife nor fail in loyalty and affection to his brother. Herod was grieved at this, and desired Antipater and Doris to have no further conversation with Pheroras, and to avoid carefully all communion with his female relatives. They promised to do so, but it was found out afterwards that they still met occasionally with their old associates. "The report went also that Antipater had criminal intercourse with the wife of Pheroras, and that they were brought together by Antipater's mother" (Ant., xvii. iii. 1). There was evidently



nothing too bad to say or suggest of the prince and his mother by those who were offended at their being brought back to court; but the attempt to make them out grossly immoral as well as seditious in their communion with a near relative was a stretch of calumny which only their most prejudiced enemies would be got to believe. The attachment between Antipater and Pheroras was strong and sincere; they were, however, soon separated and sent wide apart from each other, never to meet again. The former was despatched to Rome, to prosecute there a lawsuit against Sylleus, the Arabian, and transact other public business with Cæsar. Herod told Pheroras that, as he refused to separate from his seditious wife, he should leave Jerusalem and retire into Perea, of which province he had been for some time tetrarch. He reluctantly complied with this request, and when he soon after fell sick, the king went into Perea to visit him; yet he never recovered, and in a little while it was announced throughout the country that he was dead.

11. Now that Pheroras was dead, and Antipater had gone to Rome, the tongues of calumny could wag freely, and an excellent opportunity opened for accusing them of a treasonable plot. The king had his brother buried with much honour at Jerusalem, and soon after the funeral was over, two of the servants of Pheroras came and informed him that their master had died from poison administered by his wife. "They said that Pheroras supped with his wife the day before he fell sick, and that a certain potion was brought to him in such a sort of food as he was not used to eat, but that when he had partaken of it he died from its effects" (*Ant.*, xvii. iv. 1). This is what we find stated in our present copies of Josephus, but there is good reason to believe that it is an alteration or departure

from the original narrative. In the first place, the wife of Pheroras, mischievous, intriguing creature though she was, would be about the last woman in the world to think of poisoning her husband, for he had given her love, honour, and wealth; had elevated her from a humble position far beyond her deserts, and had screened her from punishment; and if she once lost him, there would be certain degradation in prospect, and apparently nothing to stand between her and a traitor's doom. Then it is clear, that if Pheroras had actually partaken of the poison draught that was found in the house, it would have soon produced fatal consequences, and the story ascribed to the servant implies that such was the case; yet we learn from other portions of the narrative, that he suffered from an illness so prolonged that Herod was enabled to take a journey into Perea and visit him before his death. Further, if it had been told Herod that the mischievous sister-in-law whom he hated, had poisoned the brother whom he loved, and the deadly draught had been presently found in the house in confirmation of the charge, he was not the man to let her escape punishment, yet, so far as the narrative shows, there was no step taken in this direction; she was not put on her trial for the terrible crime, nor even placed under arrest. It seems clear, then, that this story of the poisoning of Pheroras must be a clumsy addition to the narrative by some later scribe, who was too dull to perceive its incongruity. The two servants of Pheroras, who went to Herod with private information, probably told him that they entertained suspicions of their master having been poisoned, because a poisonous draught was some time before conveyed to the house. This would have been a very good ruse on the part of the conspirators, whose object was to draw the king's attention to the poison concealed in the house, and so indirectly

turn his suspicion on Pheroras and Antipater. It will be remembered that Dangerfield, who fabricated the Meal-tub Plot, pretended to suspect that smuggled merchandise was concealed in a certain house, and when the custom-house officers were thus induced to search it, they came upon—what he really wanted them to find—the seditious papers which he had there purposely hidden. By a similar stratagem, Herod's suspicions might have been directed against one hypothetical crime, with the intention that he should so unexpectedly stumble on another.

12. It is impossible to say with certainty who were the heads of the conspiracy that was formed against Antipater immediately after his uncle's death, but the wife of Pheroras clearly played a leading part in it, and this is only what might be expected from her antecedents. Like the mother of Mariamne, she was a plotting, treacherous woman in league with Herod's Jewish enemies, and she undoubtedly hated the king, and also Antipater and Doris, although she may have put on a show of friendliness towards them when they occasionally met and conversed together in the palace. Now that the husband who had protected her was dead, she must have been under great apprehension of suffering in some way or other for her past treasonable acts, and would be glad to find some means of purchasing forgiveness of the king by turning informer, and diverting the vengeance which she feared on the heads of others. She, who had paid the fine for the seditious Pharisees, could well afford to bribe both her own servants and those of Antipater, and with the assistance of these poor rogues, the story of the pretended poisoning plot and the evidence to confirm it were easily fabricated. The potion which she had concealed in the house was probably hemlock, or some other vegetable

poison, and procured in her own neighbourhood. There was no need to send to other countries for such an instrument of death, and the stories which are told about the drug being brought with immense trouble from a distance, are not only absurd but wholly irreconcilable with each other. The servants of Pheroras are made to say that it was brought from Arabia, and obtained from Sylleus, Herod's Arabian enemy, while Antipater's servant afterwards declares that it was procured in Egypt from Theudion, the maternal uncle of Antipater. It is easy to see the purpose of each of these transparent falsehoods; but the whole of the trumpery evidence got up against Antipater, and the various parts acted by the impostors in this miserable drama shall be given in full as they are recorded in the pages of Josephus.

13. "The servants of Pheroras said that two days before, his wife's mother and sister brought a woman out of Arabia, who was skilful in mixing such drugs, that she might prepare a philter for Pheroras, but that instead of a philter she had given him a poison, and that this was done by the contrivance of Sylleus, who was acquainted with the woman. The king was now deeply moved by many suspicions, and had the female domestics tortured. One of them at length cried out in her agonies, 'May the God who governs earth and heaven punish the source of all our sufferings, Antipater's mother!' The king at once took a handle from this confession, and proceeded to inquire further into the matter. So this woman disclosed the intimacy of Antipater's mother with Pheroras and his female relatives. She said that Pheroras and Antipater would drink with them for a whole night when they returned from the king, and though they would suffer no servant, whether male or female, to be present, one of the free women discovered all that passed between them. The



female slaves were next examined under torture, each separately, and they all confirmed the foregoing statement of the free woman, and declared that it was by a concerted plan that Antipater went away to Rome and Pheroras to Perea, for they often said one to the other, 'That Herod, since he had not scrupled to slay Alexander and Aristobulus, would presently fall on them and their wives, for he who had killed Mariamne and her sons would spare nobody. It were better, therefore, to flee as far as possible from this wild beast.' Frequently, too, they said, Antipater would complain to his mother in these terms:—'He was already grey, while his father seemed to grow younger, and, perhaps, death would overtake him before he could exercise the functions of a king. And in case Herod should die, which nobody could tell when, his enjoyment of the succession could only be for a short time. For there were growing up those heads of Hydra, the sons of Alexander and Aristobulus. Then it had been arranged that the succession, instead of going to his own children, should go to his brother Herod, the son of the second Mariamne. His father must be clearly beside himself to make such a will and suppose that it would stand, for he would take care that none of his posterity should survive. No other father was ever such a hater of his children, and yet did he still more hate his brother, for, not long ago, he had given him a hundred talents to relinquish all intercourse with Pheroras.' Then, when Pheroras asked what harm they had done him, Antipater replied, 'I wish that after depriving us of everything he would only leave us naked and alive. But it is utterly impossible to escape this murderous wild beast, who will not permit us openly to testify affection to any one. We now, therefore, meet secretly, but we may do so openly, if we are but endowed with the courage and the hands of men.'

14. "Such were the statements made under torture by the women, who added that Pheroras wished to flee with them to Perea. To all these declarations Herod was led to attach credit, on account of the mention of the hundred talents, for to Antipater alone had he spoken on that matter. Doris, Antipater's mother, was now the first to feel his bitter resentment, for, having stripped her of all the ornaments and costly apparel that he had presented to her, he banished her a second time from the court. The females of Pheroras' household he took great care of after their sufferings, for to them he was now reconciled. He was still, however, distracted with fear, and worried by every suspicion, and many of the innocent did he drag to the torture, being apprehensive lest one guilty person should escape. His attention was now directed to Antipater of Samaria, the steward of his son Antipater. From him, when under torture, he learnt that Antipater had sent to Egypt to procure a deadly poison for him by the hand of his companion, Antiphilus, and that Theudion, Antipater's uncle, had taken the poison and delivered it to Pheroras. For Antipater charged Pheroras to poison his father, when he was himself at Rome and away from all suspicion, while Pheroras delivered the deadly draught to his wife.

15. "The king now sent for the wife of Pheroras, and as soon as she arrived, ordered her to produce immediately the poison entrusted to her care. She withdrew as if to do so, but fearing conviction and torture from the king, she presently precipitated herself from the roof. It seemed, however, by the providence of God, who had designed to punish Antipater, that she fell not on her head but on other parts of her body, and so was preserved. When she was brought to the king, stunned by the fall, he took care of her, and, on being restored,

asked why she had thrown herself down, and promised, on oath, that he would not punish her if she told the whole truth, while, if she concealed anything, he would have her torn to pieces on the rack. Upon this the woman paused a little, and then said, 'Why should I, now that Pheroras is dead, withhold these grand secrets to save Antipater, who has been the ruin of us all? Hear, then, O king, and with you be that God who cannot be deceived a witness of my truth. When you sat weeping by Pheroras as he was dying, he called me to him, and said, "My dear wife, I have been greatly mistaken in my brother's disposition towards me, and have hated him who now evidently loves me, and have conspired against him who grieves for me even before I am dead. I indeed must now receive the recompense of my impiety, but do you bring the poison that was left with us by Antipater, and destroy it in the fire before my eyes that I may not suffer from the avenger in the future world." I then brought it as he bade me, and emptied most of it into the fire, but reserved a little for myself through fear of you and my uncertain fate.' Having made this confession, she produced the box which still contained a small quantity of the poison. The king now let her alone, and proceeded to apply the torture to the mother and brother of Antipater, who both confessed that Antipater had brought the box from Egypt, and had procured the drug from a brother of his who had practised medicine in Alexandria. Then did the avenging ghosts of Alexander and Aristobulus roam through all the palace, investigating and divulging what could not have been otherwise found out, and dragging to conviction some who were furthest removed from suspicion. It was thus discovered that Mariamne, the high-priest's daughter, was well acquainted with the

conspiracy, as attested by her brothers when put to the rack. This audacious conduct of his wife the king avenged on her offspring, for he expunged from his testament her son Herod, who had been named therein as successor to Antipater" (War, i. xxx. 1-7).

16. It would have been well if we had somewhat more full and detailed information respecting these remarkable examinations which preceded the still more remarkable trial of Antipater. They seem to have been carried on partly at the house of Pheroras in Perea, and partly at Herod's palace in Jerusalem. Who were the king's judicial advisers, if he had any, we are not informed. Neither have we any means of knowing whether the wife of Pheroras was alone, or confederated with others, in the invention of the conspiracy to ruin Antipater. Indeed, we are not even told the name of this enterprising female politician, nor anything as to what became of her after having caused such a commotion. She knew well how to impose on the king, and she also contrived to deceive his ministers, unless they, for political reasons, only pretended to believe her preposterous tale. When Herod required Antipater to discontinue further intercourse with Pheroras on account of his wife's conduct, the prince would naturally desire to convince the uncle, to whom he was so much attached, that if he communed with him less often and more cautiously in future, it would not be from any slight or coolness, but through the very strong pressure which the king had put on him, of which proof was afforded by his gift of a hundred talents. There was so far not much harm done in disclosing that transaction, but the wife of Pheroras, calling it to remembrance, now knew how to make harm of it as a help to excite the suspicions of the credulous king, and induce him to accept the



whole of her confession. Herod, like the dupes of fortune-tellers, found that the woman and her domestics knew one or two secrets of his, and so was led to believe, that all the fiction which they paraded before him as to what Pheroras and Antipater had said was equally a revelation of truth. Her jumping from the roof or verandah of the house, as if to kill herself, was evidently a piece of clever acting; indeed, she had turned the house into a masked theatre, and the whole of the judicial proceedings there carried on before the king was only a series of dramatic illusions. The servants of her establishment had been carefully tutored for the occasion; they each knew by heart the story they had to tell, and it is not likely that they suffered much from the instrument of torture, since it was usual to deal lightly with those who made a ready confession.

17. The wife of Pheroras was likely to have some personal knowledge of Antipater's discharged servants; the story which they at first told did not accord with that of her own servants, but there is little doubt that they were all eventually bribed and brought under her instruction. After Antiphilus and the steward had made their confessions, another man, who had been a member of the prince's establishment, soon presented himself for examination. One Bathyllus, Antipater's freedman, came from Rome, and "brought another deadly mixture, the poison of asps and the juices of other serpents, that, if the first draught failed to have effect, Pheroras and his wife might be furnished with this to make sure of destroying the king" (War, i. xxxi. 1). Those who get up fictitious plots to impose on the world generally overact their part, and we have an instance of it in this proceeding of Bathyllus. Men actually conspiring to poison the king would not have thought of procuring their

deadly drugs in other countries at great expense, when they could have found plenty of baneful materials close at hand for that purpose. Nor would they have provided a second and a third dose to make sure of their victim, relying, above all, on the efficacy of serpents' venom, which may be taken into the stomach with impunity. It is evident, too, that with real plotters a great deal more secrecy would have been observed. Why need Pheroras and Antipater make such a parade over the business, and even let gossiping women and servants know what they were about to do, unless they were studiously contriving means for the betrayal of their crime? In the private conversations ascribed to them, there is not only much absurd spite against Herod, which they never could have uttered in their senses, but certain statements totally at variance with what is recorded of them in other portions of the narrative. Then, the death-bed confession which the wife of Pheroras ascribes to her husband, is, on the very face of it, a preposterous fiction, which it is wonderful that the king, with all his credulity, could have ever been brought to believe. The story of the ghosts of Alexander and Aristobulus roaming through the palace to reveal some of the criminal secrets which could not be got at by ordinary means, shows that popular prejudice was as powerfully excited on this occasion as in some of the murder charges of mediæval times, and accompanied by the same unscrupulous contrivances to work on superstitious feeling and incriminate the parties unjustly accused. But the strongest proof of all that the plot ascribed to Antipater was an invention of his enemies, while he was absent at Rome, is the knavish precaution to keep him in profound ignorance of the terrible imputations advanced against him behind his back. We are told that, to prevent information from

reaching him, "the roads were strictly guarded" (Ant., xvii. iv. 3). "Yet did no one who came to Rome inform him of the charges that were being made against him for the space of seven months, so much was he hated, and perhaps the ghosts of his murdered brethren stopped the mouths of those who intended to have told him" (War. i. xxxi. 2).

18. The wife of Pheroras had, probably, confidential friends at Rome with whom she corresponded; at any rate, there was an early ramification of the conspiracy in that city. When the freedman, Bathyllus, arrived in Jerusalem with "the poison of asps and the juices of other serpents," he brought with him another kind of spurious evidence to be used against Antipater, namely, that of forged documents. We are told that he "produced letters concocted by Antipater to injure his brothers, Archelaus and Philip, sons of the king, and youths of noble disposition, then pursuing their studies at Rome. Antipater wishing to get rid of these brethren as obstacles to his hopes, forged several letters against them in the name of his friends there. Some of these he corrupted by bribes to write that the young men grossly reproached their father, openly bewailed Alexander and Aristobulus, and were indignant at being recalled. For the king had already sent for them, which was the very thing that troubled Antipater. Nay, prior to his journey, and while he was yet in Judea, he paid money to get letters of like purport sent from Rome against them, and then went to his father, who, as yet, had no suspicion of him, and apologised for his brothers, alleging in their behalf that some of the offences were falsely imputed to them, and others were youthful indiscretions. But at Rome, while he lavished large sums of money on the writers of these calumnies, he endeavoured to bring his accounts into confusion by the purchase of costly

garments, carpets of various contextures, with gold and silver cups, and other articles of value, that by the large outlay on these things he might conceal what he had spent in bribes. For he furnished an account of his expenditure to the amount of two hundred talents, of which he represented the principal item to be his lawsuit against Sylleus" (War, i. xxxi. 1, 2).

19. It sometimes happens that a base rogue charges a man of strict honour with defrauding him, or a bad woman, like Potiphar's wife, accuses a good man, like Joseph, of making an assault on her virtue. In such cases we have character arrayed against character, and, if we are well acquainted with the parties, we always know how to decide. But king Herod and his advisers, and the ancients generally, seem to have had no notion of estimating the comparative strength of opposing moral forces that were brought into collision by accusing testimony. When his son, Antipater, started on a political mission to Rome, he had the utmost confidence in his honour and probity, and gave him three hundred talents for his expenditure. The prince spent only two-thirds of that sum, and, considering his numerous purchases and heavy law costs, there is no room for suspecting that a large portion of it went for dishonest purposes. Nor had the king the least reason to suspect that Antipater regarded his youthful brethren, Archelaus and Philip, as obstacles in his path, whom he would have liked to remove by foul means, for he had certainly nothing to fear from their rivalry. He had also, before proceeding to Rome, heard those brethren accused, and had generally spoken in their defence, which was utterly inconsistent conduct in one who was all along endeavouring to blast their reputation and accomplish their ruin. Under these circumstances, when a number of foul libellous



letters against the youths were put into Herod's hands purporting to have been written at the instigation of his trusted eldest son, the king should have considered well whether it was more probable that Antipater had forged letters to injure his brethren, or that other people had forged letters to injure Antipater. When he learnt that the prince's enemies were guarding the port roads so as to prevent information from reaching him, he should have judged them capable of resorting to any other foul stratagem for the perversion of justice. The experience which he had had of lying servants in his own palace, should have taught him to receive with the greatest distrust the extraordinary stories of Bathyllus and Antiphilus. And, knowing that the mischievous wife of Pheroras "had supplied the Pharisees with money by way of rewards for what they had done against him," he should have been more disposed to believe that she was now carrying on a similar conspiracy than to believe, on the testimony of her crew, in the terrible crimes imputed to Antipater.

20. From the opening of the conspiracy immediately after the death of Pheroras till the recall of Antipater from Rome, seven months are said to have elapsed, and during that period there must have been much more done in the way of its development than what we find recorded in the narrative. When once the startling confessions of the domestics got noised abroad, the belief that the prince was actually guilty of parricide seems to have rapidly spread over the whole country, and the prejudiced and excitable Jewish population were completely carried away with the delusion. There were, undoubtedly, a number of sensible people who suspected that the whole charge was a fabrication of the prince's enemies, but they either connived at it for political reasons, or they feared to speak

out honestly in Antipater's defence. Indeed, it became at length dangerous for those who sympathised with the prince to make known their convictions, because suspicion might thus have been directed against them, and they might have been accused of aiding and abetting him in his criminal designs. While he was diligently proceeding in the discharge of his public duties at Rome, and the news was kept from him, he little imagined what an amount of mischief was brewing against him in Judea. Even the king, his father, was induced to aid the conspiracy in keeping him ignorant as to what was being done, under the apprehension that he would otherwise take warning, and not return home to receive the punishment due to his crimes. We are told that, after completing his business, "he wrote from Rome, announcing his speedy return, and saying that he had been honourably dismissed by Cæsar. Now, the king, being desirous to secure this plotter, dissembled his anger, lest he should be warned of the danger that awaited him, and wrote kindly, entreating him to come at once, as then the complaints made against his mother would be laid aside. For Antipater was now aware that his mother had been expelled from the palace. And, prior to this, he had received a letter, at Tarantum, announcing the death of Pheroras, when he gave loud expression to his grief, which some commended, in the belief that it was genuine sorrow for his uncle; but it was, probably, only vexation at the loss of his fellow-conspirator. He was, moreover, alarmed about his past proceedings lest, possibly, the poison should have been discovered. However, when he reached Cilicia, and there received his father's epistle, he at once hastened forward as he was therein directed.

21. "When Antipater was sailing into the harbour of Celendris, the thought of his mother's

misfortunes disturbed him, and he began to have in his mind some foreboding of evil. The more prudent of his friends, therefore, advised him not to place himself in the king's power till he had ascertained the reason of his mother's expulsion, as they were apprehensive lest there should be some additions to the charges made against her. But the less considerate, who were more desirous to see their native country than mindful of Antipater's welfare, persuaded him to hurry on, and not afford his father any ground for suspicion, nor give any handle to traducers. For they said, if anything had been started against him, it was owing to his absence, and would not have been ventured on had he been on the spot. It was wrong to forego certain happiness because of uncertain suspicion, and not at once return to his father, and assist him to wield the sceptre which he held with indecision. Antipater, impelled by fate, listened to these persuasions, and, sailing onward, he at length disembarked at Sebaste, the haven of Cesarea. But here he unexpectedly found a solitude, as the people shrank from his presence, and no one even dared to approach him. He was hated of all men, and now they had liberty to express their hate, while many kept aloof from him through fear of offending the king, for the whole city was filled with rumours against Antipater, and he alone was unacquainted with what so deeply concerned himself. When he set out on his voyage to Rome, none was ever more magnificently attended, nor was any man ever received with greater dishonour on his return. He began now to suspect that something was wrong at home; but, though filled with apprehension, he dissembled his fears, and put on an air of composure. There was no room for flight now, nor any way of escaping from the dangers which encompassed him. He also

obtained no certain intelligence of the state of affairs at the palace, by reason of the threats given out by the king. Yet had he some small hopes of better tidings; for perhaps nothing had been discovered, or, should anything have come to light, he might be able to clear himself by effrontery and artifice. Buoyed up by these thoughts, he arrived at the palace, and was permitted to enter unattended by his friends, for they were shut out at the first gate with insult. Varus, the President of Syria, happened to be there at the time, so Antipater, taking confidence, went into his father's presence as if to salute him. But Herod, holding up his hands and turning away his face, said: 'Even this betrays the parricide, that, when under such terrible imputations, he should wish to get me into his arms. May you be confounded, most impious wretch, and touch me not till you have cleared yourself of these charges! I will appoint a tribunal to try you, and Varus, who has now seasonably arrived, shall be your judge. Withdraw, and be prepared with your defence by to-morrow; I afford you so much time to get up suitable excuses.' Unable through consternation to reply, Antipater retired; but, being visited by his wife and mother, who told him of all the evidence brought against him, he recovered himself, and proceeded to study his defence" (War, i. xxxi. 2-5).

22. "On the day following, the king assembled a court of his kinsmen and friends, and called in also the friends of Antipater. Herod himself presiding, conjointly with Varus, directed that all the witnesses should be produced. Among these were some servants of Antipater's mother, who had been taken not long before conveying to him the following letter from her: 'Since all these things have been discovered to your father, do not return unless you can first obtain assistance from Cæsar.' When



this and all the witnesses were introduced, Antipater came in, and, falling prostrate at his father's feet, said, 'I beseech you, father, not to condemn me prematurely, but listen with unprejudiced ears to my defence; for I shall demonstrate my innocence, if you permit.' Herod, having in an angry tone commanded him to be silent, thus addressed Varus: 'I am persuaded, Varus, that you and every upright judge will pronounce Antipater an abandoned wretch. But I am afraid you will abhor my ill-fortune, and think me also worthy of all sorts of calamities for begetting such children; and yet I ought rather to be pitied, who have been a most affectionate father to such unworthy sons. For when I had settled the kingdom on my late sons while they were still young, and, besides expending much on their education at Rome, had made them the friends of Cæsar, and the envy of other kings, I found that they were plotting against me. They were put to death, and that in a great measure for the sake of Antipater, whose safety, as he was appointed to have the succession, was my chief object. But this profligate wild beast, glutted with my favours, has turned the abundance which I bestowed on him against myself; for I seemed to him to live too long, and, uneasy at the old age which I have reached, he wanted to be king by parricide. And justly am I served for bringing him back from exile to court, who was of no account before, and declaring him my successor, to the exclusion of those sons who were borne me by the queen. I acknowledge my infatuation, Varus, for I provoked those sons of mine to act against me when I cut off their just expectations for the sake of Antipater. And, indeed, what kindness did I show them to equal that conferred on him to whom I have almost resigned my authority in lifetime, and who is openly appointed my successor

to the government? I have granted him a private income of fifty talents, and supplied him liberally with money out of my personal revenues; and, on his going to Rome, I gave him three hundred talents, and recommended him, and him alone, of all my children, to Cæsar, as his father's deliverer. But what impiety were those sons of mine guilty of, compared with that of Antipater? Or what evidence was adduced against them so convincing as that which proves him a conspirator? Yet does this parricide presume to speak for himself, and hopes by his artifices to obscure the truth. You must be on your guard against him, Varus, for I know him, and foresee his plausibility and hypocritical lamentations. This is he who formerly cautioned me to beware of Alexander, and not to entrust my person with all men. This is he who escorted me even to my bed, and looked round lest any assassin might lurk in concealment. This is he who allotted my hours of slumber, and dispelled every disquietude; who condoled with my affliction for the sacrifice of my sons, and ascertained what affection my surviving sons bore me. This, indeed, was my shield-bearer and life-guard; and when I come to think, Varus, upon his craftiness on every occasion, and his art of dissembling, I can hardly believe that I am still alive, and wonder how I have escaped such a deep plotter of mischief. But since some fate or other makes my house desolate, and perpetually raises up those who are dearest to me against me, I will with tears lament my hard fortune, and privately groan under my lonesome condition. Yet am I resolved that no one who thirsts after my blood shall escape punishment, although the evidence should extend itself to all my sons' " (War, I. xxxii. 1, 2).

23. The above version is likely to be a tolerably correct report of the speech delivered by Herod on

the occasion of prosecuting Antipater for parricide. Those who regard the king as a monster of cruelty are not accustomed to blame him for the part which he took in the impeachment and condemnation of his eldest son, because they believe that the latter was guilty according to the Jewish law (Deut. xxi. 18), and was of all villains that ever lived the most deserving of death. We, also, who esteem Antipater a much calumniated and persecuted man, cannot greatly blame his father for being misled by crafty conspirators to believe in his guilt, and then acting in accordance with that belief. He was certainly in his declining years very foolish and weak-minded, utterly incapable of sifting and weighing testimony, easily imposed upon by popular clamour; but, as chief magistrate of the nation, he was determined to do his duty fearlessly as far as he knew, even against his own children; it cannot be made out that he was wilfully biassed and unjust. We have heard of a Scotch schoolmaster who had among his pupils two of his own sons, and these, when they committed an offence, he was accustomed to punish with unusual rigour, in order to demonstrate to the other boys his impartiality. Herod, in his most harsh and unfatherly treatment of Antipater when arraigned before the court of Jerusalem, seems to have been actuated by similar motives. He had been accused by a large portion of his Jewish subjects with showing an undue preference for Antipater, and exalting him unjustly over the sons of Mariamne. And he was anxious, on the first opportunity that offered, to convince the prejudiced people that they were mistaken in this matter; he was determined to show them that if Antipater committed such offences as those for which his brethren had suffered, there would be meted out to him the same punishment. The opinion of his able friend and adviser, Nicolaus of Damascus, would

also have considerable weight with him to the prejudice of his son ; and he was, no doubt, strongly impressed by the apparent growth of loyalty among his turbulent Jewish subjects, as evinced by the anxiety which they were now manifesting for his safety. In fact, Jacob, by dint of superior cunning, was again prevailing over Esau, and depriving him of his rightful inheritance. Herod, like his great ancestor, the blind old patriarch, was completely imposed upon by fictitious evidence, and so induced to treat unjustly his brave eldest son, but he had no evil intention in his heart.

24. When the king, in his speech to the court, was lamenting the troubles which he suffered from his rebellious sons, "he was overpowered with emotion and unable to proceed further, but he ordered Nicolaus, one of his chief friends, to produce the evidence against Antipater. Meanwhile, Antipater, who had been lying prostrate at his father's feet, lifted himself up and cried out:—' Father, you have yourself made my defence, for how can I be a parricide when, as you truly confess, I have ever been your protector ? My filial affection you call monstrous imposition and hypocrisy ! How, then, could it be that I, who was so subtle in other matters, should here be so senseless as not to perceive that, while it would be difficult to prevent such a horrid crime being discovered by men, it would be impossible to hide it from the all-seeing Judge of heaven ? Or was I ignorant of the fate of my brothers, who, for their evil designs against you, God visited with heavy punishment ? And what was there that could possibly provoke me against you ? Was it the hope of being a king ? I was a king already. Could I suppose that you hated me ? Nay, I knew that you loved me. And had I any fear of you ? Nay, it was you that gave me strength against my enemies. Nor did I want money, for that I had



already in abundance. Indeed, father, had I been the most wicked of mankind, had I the heart of a wild beast, must I not have been overpowered by your repeated acts of kindness? You brought me back, as you say, from exile, preferred me before so many of your sons, declared me king in your lifetime, and by your other unbounded favours made me an object of envy. O wretched me! that I should make that journey to Rome, and thus allow envy to work in my absence, and afford an opportunity for those who were plotting my ruin! Yet was I absent, father, on your affairs, that Sylleus might not take advantage of you and treat your old age with contempt. Rome is a witness to my filial affection, and so is Cæsar, the ruler of the habitable earth, for he often called me Philopater. Take these letters which he has written to you, father, they are more worthy of credit than the malevolent accusations which have sprung up against me here. These letters I produce to bear witness to my regard for you; these are my sufficient apology. Remember that it was against my own inclination that I proceeded to Rome, being well aware of the enmity that lurked against me throughout the kingdom. It is you, father, that have been the involuntary cause of my ruin; for, while I was compelled to be absent on your business, these calumnies have had time to grow up to my hurt. But I am come here, and am quite ready to listen to the evidence that is brought against me. I, who am called a parricide, have escaped in my journey all the dangers of the land and the sea. But this method of trial is of no advantage to me, for it seems, father, that I am already condemned. The evidence obtained by torturing people is not to be trusted, since those who are in much pain will say anything to be released from the pain. But let fire and other torments be brought against me, let the

racks pass through my polluted body, and spare not for my shrieks; for, if I am a parricide, I ought to be tortured to death.' As Antipater spoke thus with lamentations and tears, he moved all who heard him to compassion, and especially Varus. Herod was the only person who could not be brought to weep; for he felt assured that the charge was quite true. It appeared, however, plainly, that he was affected in his own mind, but he endeavoured to conceal his emotion" (Ant., xvii. v. 4, and War, i. xxxii. 2, 3).

25. "Then Nicolaus stood up to prosecute what the king had begun, and that with great bitterness, summing up all the evidence that was derived from the tortures and from the testimonies. He extolled at some length the generosity which the king had shown in the maintenance and education of his sons, while he yet could gain no advantage from it, but only went from one misfortune to another. The rebellious conduct of the king's late sons, he said, was not very surprising, for they were young, and corrupted by evil counsellors. This was the cause of their going against all the righteous dictates of nature in their eagerness to obtain prematurely possession of the government. But, as for Antipater, one could but stand amazed at his horrid wickedness, for though his father had bestowed on him such great benefits, he could no more be tamed than the most venomous serpents. Instead of being warned by the sad fate of his brethren, he had gone on to imitate and outdo their barbarity. Yet were you, Antipater, the accuser of your brethren, and eager to bring them to punishment. We do not blame you for being zealous in your indignation against them, but are only astonished that you should now be found equally guilty. And thus we learn that it was not for your father's safety that you were so ready to proceed against your brethren,

but only to compass their destruction. You evidently sought, by a pretended hatred of their impiety and an outward show of love to your father, to obtain thereby power to do mischief with impunity. While you convicted your brethren of wicked designs, you did not yield up to justice their confederates, and so it is clear to all men that you hoped to have their assistance when you should plot against the kingdom yourself. You hated your brethren—not for conspiring against your father—but because they were his heirs, and more worthy than you of the succession. You would now kill him, after them, lest your calumnies should be detected, and the punishment overtake you which is justly deserved. Such a parricide as you, was never before seen, for you treacherously conspired against your father when he had a strong affection for you, and was conferring on you great benefits, and had made you his partner in the government, and openly declared you his successor. But while you had the sweetness of authority already, and all these benefits, and the firm assurance of the kingdom, you must needs seek to wrest from your too generous father what was still left to him, and destroy him with your deeds, whom with words you pretended to save. And not content with being wicked yourself, you instilled into your mother evil devices, and raised disturbances among your kindred, and had the impudence to call your father a wild beast. More cruel than a serpent, you diffused poison amongst your greatest benefactors and nearest relatives, and invited their assistance, and hedged yourself about on all sides against your father in his old age, as though your great hatred towards him your own mind was not sufficient to bear. And now, here you appear, after the tortures of freemen and servants, men and women also, who have been examined on your account, and after the

information of your fellow-conspirators, as being eager to contradict the truth. You have not only designed how to take your father out of the world, but to defy that written Law which is against you, and the virtue of Varus, and the spirit of justice. Nay, the audacity in which you confide is such, that you desire to be put to the tortures yourself. While you allege that the tortures of those already examined have only elicited falsehood, we are expected to believe that your tortures will reveal the truth! O Varus! will you not deliver the king from the conspiracies of his kindred? will you not condemn this wicked wild beast, who pretended to show kindness to his father in order to destroy his brethren, while he was himself ready to seize on the kingdom and outdo all their evil deeds? For you know well, that parricide is a crime not only against common life but against nature; that the intention to perpetrate it is as bad as if it were really done, and that those who fail to punish it are guilty themselves" (Ant., xvii. v. 5).

26. It is not to be supposed that Nicolaus in his report of this extraordinary trial—for the report is undoubtedly his in its main features—has done any injustice to himself. He makes, however, but a very poor figure therein; his brutal reply to the humble and forcible appeal of the accused prince in proof of his innocence, is not much unlike that which the Wolf in the fable offers to the Lamb. Antipater might as well have been shut out of court altogether, and not suffered to speak, just as his rival brethren were treated at Berytus. The fact is, the whole trial was a mockery of justice; the prince was condemned before it commenced, as he remarked himself—condemned by the wolf of popular prejudice, which was compelling both the king and his minister to bow to its behests, and go through the formality of confirming its verdict. Varus, if he



had only had proper information respecting the wife of Pheroras, and her company of base, lying, cowardly witnesses, might have soon made the king ashamed of his credulity, and scattered the whole conspiracy like chaff before the wind. We are told how "Nicolaus added, as further evidence against Antipater, the gossip of his mother and other women, and all about the predictions and the sacrifices relating to the king, and whatever Antipater had done in his intrigues with the women of Pheroras. He rehearsed the examinations upon torture, and whatever concerned the testimonies of the witnesses, which were many and of various kinds, some prepared beforehand, and others sudden answers, which further declared and confirmed the original evidence. For those who had knowledge of Antipater's practices, but had hitherto concealed them out of fear, when they saw how his good fortune had failed him, and that he was exposed and betrayed by others, were now eager in their hatred to tell all they could. There were many who had long seen his wicked contrivances against his father and his brethren, but had been restrained from making open complaints, and now on being free to speak their minds, they came forward and made everything public. And what was thus revealed could in no way be disproved, because the many witnesses did not speak out of favour to Herod, nor were they in any fear, but they said what they knew, because they thought Antipater deserved severe punishment—not so much for his father's safety, as for his own wickedness. Many things were said by a great number of persons who were not in the least obliged to say them; so that Antipater, who was usually very shrewd with his lies and impudence, could not say one word to the contrary" (Ant., xvii. v. 6).

27. This attempt of the historian to cry up the

character of the wretched witnesses who appeared against Antipater is not a little amusing. He would have us believe that they were all virtuous and honourable citizens—men who had long observed the wickedness of the heir to the throne without daring to speak of it; but now, at length, when his impeachment had fairly begun, coming forward fearlessly and saying what they knew from the most pure and disinterested motives. In reality, the host of calumniators, who came one after another to the court of Jerusalem, were nothing more nor less than a cowardly mob, they saw a person of high rank, whom they hated intensely, knocked down and rendered powerless, and they at once rushed forward in such force to kick and trample on him that no friend dare advance to his assistance. The same thing has happened repeatedly in conspiracies of this kind; one or two bold inventors start a fiction, which obtains general credit and produces much excitement, and there are soon plenty of imitators who crowd in to corroborate it with additions. When Nicolaus had made his speech, and exhibited all the evidence, we are told that “Varus requested Antipater to say what he could in the way of defence, if he had anything prepared to show that he was not guilty, for both his father and himself would be happy to find that he was quite innocent. Then Antipater fell on his face, and appealed to God and to all men for testimony of his innocence, desiring God to show by some manifest sign that he had not plotted against his father. This is the usual way with all men destitute of virtue; when they set about a wicked enterprise, they go according to their inclination, as though they believed that God had no concern in human affairs; but when once they get found out and are in danger of punishment, they appeal to God to clear themselves from the evidence. And

such was Antipater's course, for he had long been acting as though there were no God in the world, and now, when troubled on all sides by justice, and having no means of disproving the charge brought against him, he impudently abused the majesty of God, ascribing it to his power that he had been hitherto preserved, and showing the hardships that he had undergone in acting boldly for his father's preservation."

28. "So, when Varus, on asking Antipater what he had to say for himself, found that he had nothing to say besides his appeal to God, and saw there was no end of that, he ordered them to bring the poison-draught into the court, that he might see if it still retained its efficacy. And when it was brought, and a condemned criminal drank it, at the command of Varus, he very soon died. So Varus, after having a private conversation with Herod, got up and left the court, and went, the following day, to Antioch, where he resided in the Syrian palace. No one knew what was spoken between them, but Antipater was kept in bonds; and it was generally supposed that what the king did afterwards was done by the president's approval. Herod, having imprisoned his son, sent letters to Cæsar, and such messengers as should make known his wickedness by word of mouth. Now at this very time, there was seized a letter of Antiphilus, written from Egypt to Antipater, and, when it was opened by the king, it was found to contain what follows:—'I have sent you Acme's letter, and hazarded my own life; for you know that, if discovered, I am in danger from two families. I wish you good success in your affair.' Such were the contents of this letter; but the king made inquiry about the other letter also, for it did not appear. Now the servant of Antiphilus, who brought the letter that was read, denied that he had received any other. But, while Herod was in

doubt about it, one of his friends observed that the man wore two coats, and, seeing a seam on the inner coat and a doubling of the cloth, he guessed that the letter might be there, and this proved to be true. So they took out the letter, and its contents were as follows:—‘Acme to Antipater,—I have written such a letter to your father as you wished me to write. I have also made a copy and sent it, as if it came from Salome, to my Lady Livia, which, when it shall be read, I am sure Herod will punish Salome under the belief that she is plotting against him.’ Now, this pretended letter of Salome to her lady, was composed by Antipater in the name of Salome as to its sense, but in the writing of Acme. The letter was this:—‘Acme to King Herod—I have done my best endeavour that nothing which is plotted against you shall be concealed from you. On finding a letter from Salome written to my lady against you, I have made a copy of it, and now send it you, with hazard to myself, but for your advantage. The reason of her writing it was this, that she had a mind to be married to Sylleus. Do you, therefore, destroy this letter that I may not be in danger of my life.’ Thus Acme had written to Antipater himself to say, that in compliance with his wishes she had also written to Herod, to make out that Salome was plotting against him, while she herself had sent him a copy of Salome’s epistle to her lady. This Acme was of Jewish birth, and a servant of Julia, the wife of Cæsar; and she acted thus out of friendship to Antipater, having been corrupted by him with a large present of money to assist in his nefarious designs against his father and aunt. Herod was now so amazed at the enormous wickedness of Antipater, that he was ready to order his immediate execution, since he had not only plotted against himself and Salome, but had even corrupted Cæsar’s household. Salome also pro-



voked him to it, beating her breast, and bidding him kill her, if it could be proved that she had any hand in that plot. Herod also sent for Antipater, and asked him about the matter, and bade him contradict it if he could, and keep back nothing that would tell in his defence. And, when he had not one word to say, the king desired him, as he was every way caught in his villany, to conceal no longer his wicked associates. So he laid all upon Antiphilus, but discovered no one else. Herod was now in such grief, that he was inclined to send his son to Rome, to give an account there of his parricidal designs to Cæsar. But he soon became apprehensive that Antipater might thus, by the assistance of friends, effect his escape, so he kept him bound and sent further messengers to Rome to accuse him, and show how Acme, with her writing, had aided his designs" (Ant., xvii. v. 7, 8).

29. This judicial war, directed against Antipater, was conducted on something like military principles; the conspirators, apprehensive that their first line of fictitious evidence might break down or not have the desired success, were continually bringing up reinforcements. First, a certain prepared poison was discovered, then a more deadly draught; lies followed on lies, and forgeries on forgeries, and the poor victim was at length hemmed in on every side by the vile pack of calumniators, and literally hunted to death. The letters directed to Antipater by the crafty rogue Antiphilus, and sent by a messenger with much simulation of careful secrecy, were letters obviously intended to be discovered for the purpose of making it appear, that while at Rome he was plotting with the servant, Acme, to incriminate his aunt, Salome, in a treasonable correspondence against the king. It is a strange thing, that while his enemies were thus making out with abundant art that he was a forger

of correspondence to cumulate the king's relatives, they should not have been suspected of doing this very thing themselves. And it is the more surprising, when we remember that the forging of letters and other documents was then a very common stratagem, and that a trick of this kind had been not long before practised by the scribe, Diophantus, against Herod's late sons, and was then speedily exposed. It is worthy of remark, that, while the evidence of a murderous design against the king on the part of Antipater is precisely similar in character to that which had been previously adduced against his half-Asmonean sons, it received a widely different consideration from the Jewish people. All the testimonies delivered to the prejudice of Alexander and Aristobulus were denounced as calumnies, but the various stories put forth to incite the king against the rival son, whom they hated, were accepted as infallible truths. Salome, in making evil reports of the former, was a wicked and envious court gossip, wholly unworthy of credit; when, however, she began to raise suspicions against the latter, or rather against his associates, she was at once transformed into a trusty detective. Herod, himself, was deemed a foolish and credulous ruler for listening to the tales which were told of those sons, whom a faction were eager to push into his throne; although it is admitted, that at the trial "he urged the accusation of their plotting against his life but faintly, because he was destitute of proofs." Yet when he, subsequently, gave a ready ear to the more absurd fictions which were concocted to incriminate Antipater, and urged them at the trial with much vehemence by the mouth of Nicolaus, he was regarded as a discreet and sensible judge. So much for popular prejudice! The great sin, the unpardonable offence of poor Antipater, that which made

him the vilest of knaves, was his presuming to accept the regal inheritance from his father, without being able to boast of Asmonean blood !

30. It says much for Antipater's character, that Nicolaus, his bitter accuser, when putting forth every effort to blast his reputation, failed to adduce against him any clear, specific charges of former guilt, and therefore assailed him with indiscriminate abuse. Had he, during his period of banishment, led any other than a virtuous and honourable life, all his past transgressions would now have been remembered to his hurt. Moreover, if he had been the cunning rogue and calumniator that his prejudiced enemies represented him to be, he would have made a very different defence when put on his trial for parricide, and perhaps a more successful defence. He would have fought his accusers with their own weapons, plotted against their plots, answered their lies with more ingenious counter-lies, and thus completely embarrassed them, and rendered the whole court a scene of confusion. This was a common practice with the Jews of that period ; when calumniated, and not able to clear themselves satisfactorily, they invented for that purpose fictitious evidence, or retaliated by falsely accusing their accusers. Alexander and Aristobulus had both learned this unscrupulous means of vindicating themselves ; they threw poisoned darts at random among their opponents, and calumniated grossly even those from whom they had not suffered a similar wrong. But Antipater, to his eternal honour, did not stoop to such crooked devices, even for the saving of his life. No malicious attempt was made by him to sow distrust between his father and the pleader Nicolaus ; he showed what manner of man he was by simply declaring to Heaven that of which he was conscious—his own innocence—and not venturing to point out his

enemies' hidden guilt. This plain, straightforward, simple-minded Idumean—exactly the opposite of the rogue that he had been represented—relied on his strength, and courage, and the justice of his cause, and was utterly incapable of advancing his ends by a system of treachery. Neither he nor his father had sufficient subtlety to oppose successfully the craft of Greeks and Jews, and unravel their conspiracies; nor could they, even if base and unscrupulous enough, have played the part of such conspirators themselves. These regal men, who should have been attached to each other by the strongest of all ties, and would have been if let alone, were easily outwitted by the cunning of their foes, and brought face to face in deadly antagonism, like the poor gladiators of Rome, who appeared in the arena to make sport for the multitude!

31. In our modern administration of justice we are accustomed to reflect that no crime is ever committed by a sane person without an adequate motive. When a man is accused of murder, and we find on inquiry that he could not have the slightest hope of gain from the crime imputed to him, while his accusers are known to bear ill-will towards him, and expect to profit by his death; so far from readily believing the charge, we feel in our own minds a very strong conviction that he is calumniated. If this sound maxim of jurisprudence had been acted on in bygone times, it would have saved thousands of poor Jews from being hunted to death by mediæval mobs, and would have equally cleared from their accusing forefathers the unfortunate Antipater. Where kings had been murdered by relatives who wanted to step into their position, the latter have always been pushed on to perpetrate the foul deed by a band of unscrupulous partisans, who hoped to profit by the change of government. Herod's half-Asmonean sons, as we



have already seen, were under such prompting; they had behind them a powerful, discontented faction, inciting them by every possible artifice against their father, and inducing them to long for his death. It is by no means likely that, with all the encouragement of evil counsellors, they ever went so far as to seriously contemplate the crime of parricide; yet their known hatred towards the king, and their eagerness to lay hold of the reins of government, made them, not unreasonably, objects of suspicion. But the circumstances of Antipater, and the influences brought to bear upon him, were altogether different. He was never known to plot against his father, even when he was younger, and had some excuse for doing so—at the time of his being undeservedly cast off and banished. And now that he had tasted of adversity, and was at length restored to his rightful position as heir to the throne, so far from feeling aggrieved and resentful, his heart must have been overflowing with filial gratitude. Then there was no revolutionary faction inciting him against the king, with the view to hasten his own accession to power, nor could he himself reasonably entertain a wish for his father's speedy death, but, on the contrary, would be clearly benefited by the prolongation of his life. Even if we could bring ourselves to believe that Antipater was such a vile wretch as his enemies have endeavoured to make him appear, we should still deem the monstrous plot of which he is accused wholly incredible, because it was directly against his own interests. Surrounded as he was by hostile prejudice, which it would require years to conciliate, the death of the king, just at that period, would have been to him a most untoward event, and would have seriously imperilled his future prospects. It is further to be noted that his uncle and mother, who

were accused of abetting his criminal designs, could no more than himself expect to derive thereby the least advantage; nay, these three individuals, to whom the king was a tower of strength, must have regretted his sudden removal as adversely affecting their own fortunes more than any other three people in the whole country.

32. Had Antipater been treated justly from the first, and trained up as heir to the throne, all the hopes of the loyal population would have centred upon him, and the king would have found him in old age a great comfort and sure support. But he was driven into exile, and Herod thought that his marriage with Mariamne would presently give him sons who, by reason of their high connexions, would command the respect of all parties throughout the country, and thereby greatly strengthen his throne. He ought to have foreseen that, when such sons were made his heirs, they would, in all probability, fall under the influence of the disloyal Asmonean faction, and turn against him as rivals and enemies. So it proved to be; he found out at length his mistake, and then, to extricate himself from this blunder, committed another,—called Antipater back to court, and decreed that he and his two rival brothers should all reign in succession. From such a hopeless and conflicting arrangement war in some shape or other was sure to result, and the opposing parties engaged before long in a judicial war: not being allowed to vent their animosity in a fierce hand-to-hand encounter they sought to destroy each other indirectly by stratagems and lies. Notwithstanding his sincere wish to act as a peacemaker and reconciler of differences, the difficulties of his own making were too strong for him, and Herod was provoked by the increasing hostility of his half-Asmonean sons to take part against them in the strife. He con-

sented at length to their condemnation and death, with the view to restore harmony, and thought that with this painful sacrifice he should be finally rid of his family troubles, and return to the simple domestic quiet which he enjoyed with Doris and her son, before they were cleared out of the palace to make way for the proud princess Mariamne. But again he miscalculated ; a further Nemesis awaited him ; he had not yet paid the full penalty that was due to his persistent folly. Now that he had cut off his rebellious sons, the trickery of a revengeful faction so completely imposed upon him as to turn him distrustfully the other way, and induce him to augment his grief by striking down, for the gratification of their wishes, his primogenial inheritor.

33. Soon after the trial and condemnation of Antipater, the king, whose health had long suffered from severe domestic troubles, became entirely disabled, and confined to his bed with dropsical symptoms, so that there was little expectation of his recovery. His insidious enemies had now done their work, and they looked forward with hope to see their two hated Idumean rulers, father and son, fall together. Having fought against Herod perseveringly with plots and intrigues, and reduced him to a worn-out and dying condition, some of them thought that the time was at length come when they might venture to defy his authority and engage in open revolt. The imperial eagle was, therefore, pulled down from the Temple-gate by way of commencement ; but, feeble and prostrate as he was, he knew well how to meet them in any conflict where he was not circumvented by treachery, and, therefore, speedily stamped out their incipient insurrection. This affair clearly indicated the spirit of the disaffected population of Jerusalem, and the worry which it occasioned the king undoubtedly aggravated his malady. After

trying the hot baths of Callirrhoë without deriving much benefit, "there came letters from his ambassadors at Rome, informing him that the servant Acme had been executed at Cæsar's command, and that Antipater was condemned to death. It was added, however, that if Herod preferred to banish his son, he was permitted to do so. The king now revived a little, and seemed desirous to live, but presently, being overborne by his pains and weakened by want of sustenance and a convulsive cough, he endeavoured to anticipate the stroke of death. Taking up an apple, he asked for a knife, as he was accustomed to pare apples and eat them; then, looking round to see that there was no one to hinder him, he raised his hand as if he would stab himself. But Achiabus, his cousin, rushing forward, seized and withheld his hand. The palace was now filled with loud lamentations, as if the king were really expiring. As soon as this clamour was heard by Antipater, his spirits revived, and, elate with joy, he besought the guards to release him from bondage and allow him to escape, for a reward. The captain, however, not only forbade this, but ran and acquainted the king with his design. Herod, with greater strength than could have been expected for one in his condition, now called out to his spearmen to hasten to the spot and despatch him. He further gave orders that Antipater should be buried at Hyrcanium, and again altering his will, made therein Archelaus his heir and successor, and appointed Antipas tetrarch. Herod survived the slaughter of his son five days, when he died, after reigning thirty-four years since he caused Antigonus to be slain, and thirty-seven from the time of his being made king by the Romans" (War, i. xxxiii. 7, 8).

34. Dean Farrar says of Herod: "More ghosts must have gathered round the dying bed of this



gorgeous criminal than those which the fancy of Shakespeare has collected round the bed of Richard III." Herod certainly did not murder and usurp after the manner of Richard; he won his kingdom fairly by merit. It was inevitable that the imagination of his enemies should connect with the closing of his career a number of calumnious myths. We have examined, in a former chapter, the absurd story about his requiring one out of every family to be slain immediately after his death, so as to produce for him a genuine national mourning. The statements as to his attempting to commit suicide, and directly afterwards ordering "the slaughter of his son," clearly belong to the same order of hostile fictions, if somewhat less monstrous and incredible. We are told that he took up an apple, and asked for a knife to pare it, as he was accustomed to do; then, on obtaining the knife, lifted his hand as if he would stab himself. A sick man, pointing to his breast with a small knife which he was using, might be thinking of stabbing himself, or might only be indicating the seat of pain. If Herod was thus pointing with the former intention, the contemplated stab would have been accomplished before his cousin Achiabus could rush forward and arrest his hand. But, as no wound was actually inflicted, the attendants, under such circumstances, would naturally have been reassured, and led to consider their momentary apprehension of the king resorting to such violence as groundless. It is certain that such a trifling incident would not have sufficed to fill the whole palace with alarm and lamentation, insomuch that the uproar should even reach the ears of the imprisoned Antipater. Then it is impossible to believe the story of Antipater rejoicing in prison at the prospect of his father's approaching dissolution, and entreating the warders to let him escape with the offer of a

bribe. For the prince knew well, that he had a host of bitter enemies in Jerusalem thirsting for his blood ; he could not want to rush into their hands, while the king had no enmity towards him, only as he had been misled by a multitude of calumnies, and, therefore, the only hope of safety now left for him was in the prolongation of his father's life. The mischievous people, who were ever doing their utmost to sow strife in the royal household, had conspired at an earlier period to excite the suspicions of the credulous king against Pheroras, yet he was then able at length to see through their devices, and they failed to secure their intended victim. Antipater, remembering that "Pheroras was acquitted of the murderous designs of which he had been accused" (War, i. xxiv. 6), might reasonably hope that his father would acquit him, too, even after the trial and condemnation, if he could only live to discover the artifices of the conspirators, while, in the event of his speedy death, he could have no expectation of mercy from the conspirators themselves. His enemies were apprehensive that his father would pardon him, as shown by the additional fictitious evidence brought against him after the trial ; and there can be little doubt that, at the last, they either frightened Herod by some false story to order his immediate execution, or that they went and put him to death on the king's forged authority. The imprisoned commander, Silas, was executed by such means immediately after the death of Herod Agrippa. We are told that, before the multitude knew what had happened, some of the king's friends "sent his faithful servant Aristo and slew Silas, who had been their enemy, as though it had been done by the king's own command" (Ant., xix. vii. 3).

35. According to Macrobius, Augustus Cæsar once made the remark, "*Melius est Herodis porcum*

esse quam filium" (Saturn. ii. 2), and this is supposed to have been said soon after the execution of Antipater. Some such cynical comment might have proceeded from many Romans who were unacquainted with all the circumstances of the case, but it is not likely to have originated from the emperor. For, though not present at the trial, his representative, Varus, was there, and he subsequently had all the evidence placed before him, and then confirmed the decision of the court with his own judgment, so that he must be considered just as much responsible for the death of Antipater as Herod himself. And if, as we are told, he had his wife's servant, Acme, put to death, who seems to have been used as an unconscious tool by Antipater's enemies in forging the absurd correspondence ascribed to him, the great emperor was really almost as credulous as the king, and as easily duped by the tricks of conspirators. Augustus must have been acquainted with many plots; but what Antipater and Pheroras were accused of doing with so little secrecy and precaution, no more resembled a real plot than an ill-constructed scarecrow is like a living man. The emperor could hardly have pleaded ignorance to the following facts:—That Antipater had been recently sent to him highly recommended, and during the whole of his stay at Rome had won the respect of the imperial government. That he was an object of hatred to the powerful Asmonean faction in Judea, who would be likely to plot against him during his absence. That Herod, who was morbidly apprehensive of being poisoned, had on three previous occasions been led to suspect that a relative was thus seeking to take his life. That Antipater, as undisputed heir to the throne, and in view of the hostile prejudices arrayed against him, had no conceivable motive for murdering his father, nay, had every reason to desire the lengthening of

his life. How Augustus, with this knowledge before him, could have accepted without question the miserable rags of fictitious evidence forwarded to him from Jerusalem as a proof that the prince was really guilty of parricide, is quite beyond our comprehension. It is true that he permitted the sentence of death to be commuted to banishment, but it needed a peremptory command to save the prince's life, and he ought to have interposed and obtained for him a new and thoroughly fair trial at some distance from Judea.

36. "The judicial war which distracted Herod's household, and terminated with the condemnation and death of Antipater, was discreditable to the king and to all others who were engaged in it, whether they were conspirators or dupes. But even since then, many other scandalous prosecutions have been carried on in various countries to the mockery of justice. In the fourth century, the Christian emperor, Valentinian, had many pagans, some of them persons of high position, judicially slain, because they were suspected of injuring Christians with magical arts. "A general charge of magic hung over the whole city. Maximin poured these dark rumours into the greedy ear of Valentinian, and obtained the authority which he coveted for making a strict inquisition into these offences, for exacting evidence by torture from men of every rank and station, and for condemning them to a barbarous and ignominious death" (Milman's History of Christianity, vol. iii. p. 37). Not long after, the Jews began to be accused of poisoning wells, crucifying children, and other horrible practices, and many thousands were in consequence tried, tortured, and executed. In Hungary, Roumania, and other parts of Eastern Europe, the barbarous "blood accusations" are still occasionally revived against them at Easter, and



confirmed in some instances by a formidable chain of fictitious evidence. During the reign of Charles II., his brother and heir, the Duke of York, was, from his attachment to the Catholic faith, a sort of Antipater, whom a majority of the English people hated intensely, and were determined, if possible, to cut off from the succession. Many calumnies were raised against him, by his more unscrupulous foes; they did not venture to openly accuse him of plotting to murder his royal brother, but they charged several of his Catholic partisans with making such attempts in order to place him on the throne; and these unfortunate people suffered accordingly. "The juries," says Macaulay, "partook of the feeling then common throughout the nation, and were encouraged by the Bench to indulge those feelings without restraint. The multitude applauded Oates and his confederates, hooted and pelted the witnesses who appeared in behalf of the accused, and shouted with joy when the verdict of 'Guilty' was pronounced. It was in vain that the sufferers appealed to the respectability of their past lives, for the public mind was possessed with a belief that, the more conscientious a Papist was, the more likely he must be to plot against a Protestant government" (History of England, vol. i. p. 238). About a hundred years later, a number of Catholics in France got up equally false charges against some of their fellow-citizens who held the Protestant faith. Antony, the son of Jean Calas, a Protestant, hung himself in his father's warehouse, and it soon got rumoured abroad that he had been strangled by the family to prevent him from changing his religion, which was said to be a common practice with Protestants. This popular story obtained credit with the local magistrates; Antony Calas was looked upon as a Catholic martyr, and his dead body was taken and buried with great honour by some of the

religious fraternities. Meanwhile, the other members of the family were imprisoned and put on the rack, with the view to extort from them a confession. They appealed to a higher court—that is, to the Parliament of Toulouse, but did not find there more enlightened and unprejudiced judges. The father was tortured, and then sentenced to be broken alive on the wheel and afterwards burnt, which barbarous execution took place in March, 1762. His surviving son, Pierre Calas, was banished for life. The widow, however, found enlightened friends, who ably exposed the hollowness of the whole proceedings, and the flagrant wrong which had been perpetrated in the name of justice. The matter was, at length, laid before the National Council at Versailles, which speedily annulled all that had been done by the Parliament of Toulouse, and, though the unfortunate father could not now be recalled to life, the son was restored to liberty.

37. On a review of the whole case, we are compelled to say that justice owes much to the memory of the martyred prince, Antipater. Among the list of noble characters who, after encountering great adversity and leading an irreproachable life, have at length died as victims of popular prejudice and calumny, none is more deserving than he of our sympathy and tears. A band of heartless conspirators destroyed with their lies the rightful heir to the throne; the capable prince, who, if he had lived and been well supported, would have continued the good work begun by his father, and saved the nation from going headlong to ruin. What makes his fate the more lamentable is, that the terrible wrong which he suffered has never been repented of, and nothing has since been done by posterity to vindicate his reputation. People still believe in the wretched libels handed down by Josephus, and, instead of erecting statues in his

honour, persist in keeping him gibbeted as a "fearful warning to mankind" (Ant., xvii. iii. 3). As very few clear-sighted persons can be got to turn their attention to the subject of this wrong, in all probability further centuries will have to elapse before the popular judgment is vigorously questioned, and in a fair way of being reversed. Some renowned martyrs have been too well requited with glory and praise, because they were contentious fanatics and persecution-seekers; they studiously provoked the hostility of those who were unable to sympathise with them, and sacrificed their lives under the allurements of other-worldliness. A martyr-mania had long infected the population of Judea in the time of Prince Antipater, but he—a truly religious man—was calumniated, imprisoned, condemned, and sent to execution, quite apart from its influence. He did not fear pain, nor cowardly shrink from death, and neither did he artfully incite people to kill him, in the hope of obtaining hereafter from a higher tribunal enormous judicial compensation. It was his firm belief that justice existed somewhere, that truth was sooner or later bound to prevail; and, finding himself forsaken by his friends and deserted by all men in the most bitter wrong suffering that could well be imagined, he confidently appealed to the judgment of the Eternal.

38. King Herod, standing between the two Antipaters—his murdered father and his martyred son—presents on the whole a less creditable figure than either of them. There are many follies, blunders, and barbarous proceedings connected with him, from which they are very happily free. We must remember, however, that they did not rule for nearly forty years a turbulent kingdom; they were never beset by similar temptations, nor placed in equally trying circumstances. Herod's conduct,

so long as he was only a general and a provincial governor, was admirable; he did not cultivate luxury, he was faithful and diligent in the discharge of his duties, and he succeeded in maintaining order without undue severity. When tried before the Sanhedrin on a charge of murder, for having extirpated a band of Galilean robbers, he was nothing short of a hero; and the honest Syrians, whom he delivered from repeated border ravages, rightly sung songs in his praise. His conduct was still more heroic from the time when he conveyed his friends away from Jerusalem in safety by a midnight retreat, and lodged them in the fortress of Masada, till the day when he returned from Rome invested with sovereign power and effected their complete deliverance. He was one of nature's unmistakable chieftains—energetic, brave, generous, and determined to put down wrong—exactly the kind of leader that a large industrial community are accustomed to look to for succour and protection. And if his subjects had all been Idumeans, Samaritans, or Syrians—a loyal, homogeneous, contented people—he would have enjoyed as much honour among them as his son Philip afterwards obtained when he became ruler of Batanea and Gaulonitis (*Ant.*, xviii. iv. 6). It was Herod's great misfortune to have in the chief province of his kingdom a large population of prejudiced Jews, whom nothing that he could do in their behalf would ever reconcile to his government. And he did not sufficiently understand this strange exclusive people full of prophetic dreams, but went on repeatedly wasting efforts to gain their affection, and wooing them to no purpose. He married the Princess Mariamne in the hope of conciliating her proud race, and presently found that he had taken a traitor into his house; he made Jerusalem his capital, and thus thought to be respected there, but only sat himself down in a



hornet's nest. Being outwitted by a multitude of spiteful, intriguing foes—teased, plagued, tormented by their persistent attacks, and driven half-mad—we cannot much wonder that under these circumstances he struck about rather wildly in his efforts to maintain order, and occasionally struck in the wrong direction. His errors, even when viewed in the worst light, were rather intellectual than moral; age and sickness, enfeebled him, and he was wanting in astuteness, credulous, easily imposed upon, and thus laid hold of as a partisan weapon to inflict punishment on the innocent, but he was not spontaneously cruel and unjust.

39. A number of eminent persons—statesmen, poets, philosophers, ministers of religion—have gone mad in their declining years either from great worry or excessive mental exertion and insufficient rest. In this unhappy condition they have said and done outrageous things entirely at variance with their former line of conduct, and in some instances have murderously assailed their friends or committed suicide. It is usual, in estimating the characters of such suffering people, to take into consideration only the sane portion of their lives and with tender feeling draw a veil over the rest. Assuming Herod to have become deranged in his old age, as he well might with all his troubles, he is surely entitled to the same charitable allowance, yet he is commonly treated in the reverse way by partial historians. "See what a monster he was!" they cry, as they parade before the world the tragical closing scenes which resulted from his mental affliction, while the many heroic and generous deeds for which he was distinguished when blessed with sanity, they are careful to keep out of sight. We do not think that the testimony of Josephus affords sufficient warrant for believing Herod's mind to have been unhinged in his later years, but

he was certainly then in failing health, and with such enfeebled perceptive powers as to be unfitted to hold the reins of government. And it seems to us that the errors which he fell into under these circumstances and the wrongs which he committed are entitled to be judged as charitably as if he had been actually bereft of reason.

40. There are many professions, besides that of ruling a kingdom, which can only be fitly exercised by persons in full health and strength; and when the powers which render them efficient are declining, it is desirable that they should perform less arduous duties or seek retirement. If our police constables were required to serve till they became old and feeble, the rogues would be seen to take advantage of them in every way, and there would be an increase of crime throughout the country. If the engine-drivers on our railways had to continue in their employment till they got bent and hoary with years, we should frequently hear of trains being wrecked and many lives lost from their failing to avert collisions. And the poor infirm men thus set to do work beyond their powers, would probably be more pitied than blamed for resulting failures. It has always been found much less easy to displace a worn and disabled king than to remove an inefficient constable or other subordinate official, and Herod had governed so well in his best years that if he had wished to retire when stricken with age he would have been dissuaded from it by Cæsar, who knew not where to look for a worthy successor. Thus the decrepit and worried ruler, so much needing rest, had to keep on to the last under all his infirmities and die in harness. The regal office is generally hereditary, and a king who finds his powers failing will often have a strong helping son to supplement his deficiencies. Herod should have had such a timely filial support in old age, but was

deprived of it by his plotting enemies. He had several sons, and so much dissension was caused by those who laid hold of them to pull different ways for their party purposes, that he would have succeeded better if fortune had rendered him childless. It is not surprising that under these very difficult and trying circumstances his health failed, and that in a confused state of mind he did things which were quite contrary to his normal disposition. He was naturally an ardent and capable peacemaker, but getting unfortunately allied with the Asmoneans (probably the most quarrelsome family in the Roman empire) opposing factions so overpowered and outwitted him in old age, that he became at length in their hands only a sanguinary executioner.

41. Though we have long been accustomed to regard this ancient ruler as a monster, when once the clouds of myth that have hung over his figure disperse, and afford us a clearer view, he is found to be, after all, a man, very much like ourselves. It is indisputable that, both in respect to his merits and his failings, he possessed many traits of our common English character. We have always been considered a strong, frank, courageous, free-spending people, and are, at the same time, a blundering people, ever getting into difficulties for the want of a little forecast, and, while needlessly distrustful in some matters, being easily circumvented by those who know how to take advantage of our blind side. Herod was such, and if it were so arranged that he should reappear after twenty centuries under another name, and take up his abode with us, there can be little doubt that he would soon be thoroughly at home and in congenial society. Passionately fond of athletic sports, able to ride well to hounds, command a cavalry regiment, direct engineering operations, and deliver a telling speech

—he would constitute an admirable specimen of the English country gentlemen; and, with his simple Jewish theism modified by Greek and Latin culture, might pass very well for having received a university education. Indeed, when taken with all his errors and failings, with all his sins and barbarities, it would be difficult to find among the ancients any other individual so nearly allied in disposition and sentiment to ourselves. On observing how readily he listened to calumny, inflicted torture on poor witnesses, and condemned innocent people to death, we may entertain a conceit of being much more enlightened and humane; but it was not so very long ago, when a vain apprehension existed of suffering from the machinations of witches and papists, that judicial wrongs of quite as gross a character were perpetrated in our own country. And, even in recent years, visionary alarms of another kind have occasionally turned us aside from the plain path of rectitude, and induced us to shed much innocent blood. If Herod entertained an unreasonable fear of being poisoned, we are accustomed to indulge in equally groundless misgivings of being invaded—invaded, mind, not by marauding savages, but by Europeans as industrious, civilised, and law-abiding as ourselves. And, under the influence of a panic feeling most discreditable to a brave nation, we proceed now and then to anticipate an imaginary aggression, which is to fall on us, by committing a real one; we set about to punish with terrible severity those who are supposed to be plotting our ruin, when it is quite clear that they would not gain, but lose much by carrying out the designs imputed to them, and, unless they were really stark mad, such an extravagant conspiracy could never once enter their minds. The king's political morality will compare favourably with our own, for he was ever courteous to foreigners, non-



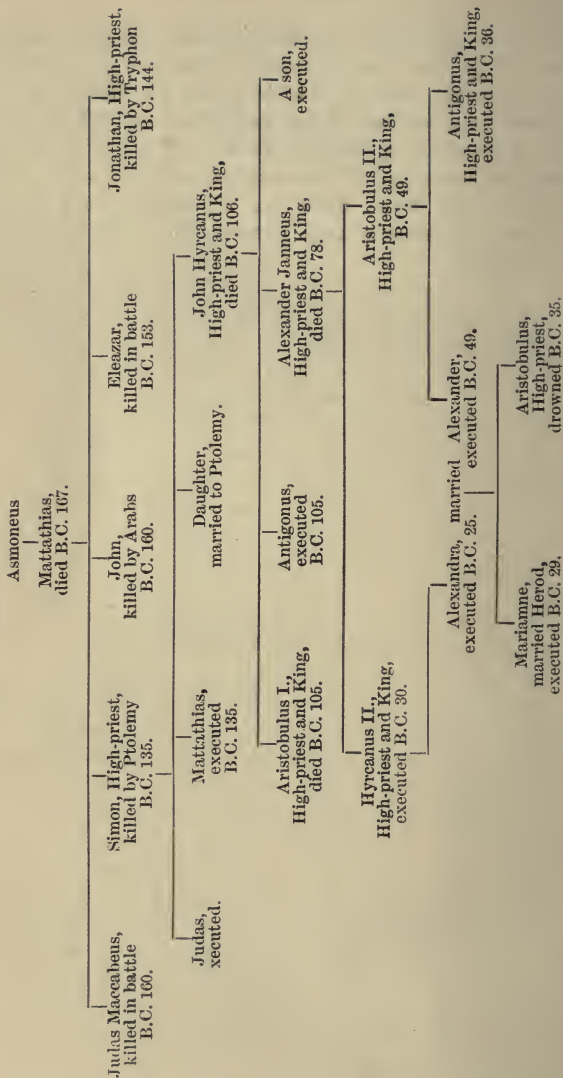
aggressive, and sincerely devoted to the preservation of peace.

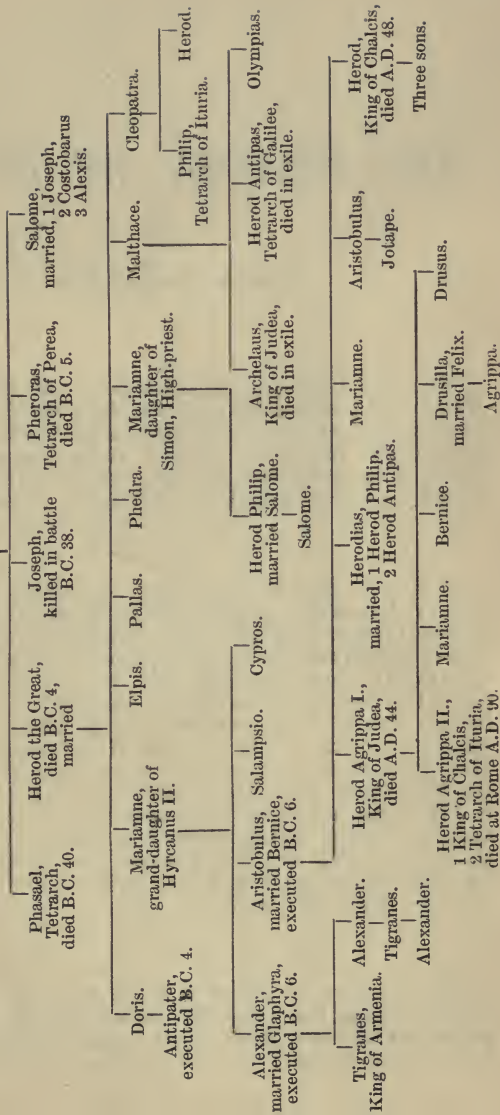
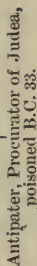
42. One final parting word must be spoken for Herod. There are many calumniated people in the world for whom very little can be said by way of vindication, because they persistently calumniate others. Engaging in a war of aspersion, they hurl untruthful charges against those whom they dislike, and when blackened in return are entitled to no sympathy. Very different from these habitual traducers stood the silent, strong Idumean; he was surrounded by lying people, and sometimes induced to act wrongly through believing their lies, but his worst enemies have never attempted to make out that he was addicted himself to mendacity. The Romans held him in great respect from first to last, chiefly for the reason that he did not deceive them like the Asmonean princes, and they could always rely on his word. When false charges were advanced by unscrupulous Greeks against his half-Asmonean sons, these young men retaliated quickly with counter-lies, but he did not meet defamation with such base devices, neither did the poor martyred prince Antipater. It would have been an impracticable task to honestly refute all the calumnious myths that were hatched against himself throughout the country, and he would consider such creations of fancy unworthy of serious notice. Detraction, from which his memory has suffered so much, was quite foreign to his nature; in his sad declining years he had not a mean, envious disposition, never seeking to disparage people; while in the prime of life his generous heart diffused gladness around him, and delighted to bestow well-deserved honour and praise. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than the rewarding of great achievements, the promotion of meritorious men, and the erection of handsome monuments to commemorate departed

worth. He stood between his peaceful subjects and lawless aggression, continually incurring enmity and risking his own life in efforts to safeguard others ; and if his powers at length failed and lying enemies goaded him in old age to commit judicial wrongs, it is unreasonable to charge him in addition with fabulous atrocities and expose him on an everlasting gibbet to the execration of mankind.



*Genealogical Table of the Asmonean or Maccabean Family.*







# THE HISTORY OF HEROD.

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## ***Press Opinions.***

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“If modern scholars and historians took their view of Herod from the mediæval miracle-plays, Mr. Vickers would scarcely need to be so passionate in his vindication. But there is not one single critic or commentator of repute, orthodox or rationalist, who now thinks of denying that Herod had splendid qualities.”—*Saturday Review*.

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“Although the writer adds no new matter to the story told by Josephus, and although he takes the part of an advocate rather than that of a judge, yet his reading of the text is so fair, and the consequent inferences are so reasonable, that he may be justly held to have earned for his client the favourable verdict of posterity. . . . None but an able soldier, a consummate diplomatist and a just statesman could have acquired, as Herod undoubtedly did, the confidence of the successive rulers of the Roman world, and the respect of his subjects as evinced by the tranquillity of his kingdom during the greater part of a long reign and the anarchy which followed his death. . . . Our thanks are due to Mr. Vickers for having produced an exceedingly lively and well-written account of the epoch.”—*Westminster Review*.

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“This account of Herod is much more reasonable and truthful than the accepted traditional picture which represents him as a blood-thirsty tyrant.”—*Theologisch Literatur Zeitung* (Leipzig).

"Mr. Vickers thinks that, compared with his Asmonean predecessors and the Roman governors who followed him, Herod was rather distinguished for humanity than cruelty. He describes him as a good deal like the typical Englishman. . . . This history deserves careful reading."—*Graphic*.

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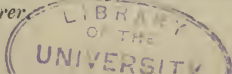
"To all impressed with the justice of the ancient aphorism, 'Audi alteram partem,' we would commend the perusal of this really remarkable volume."—*Knowledge*.

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"There can be no doubt that one will be better able to judge intelligently, not only of Herod as a man and a ruler, but also of the Jewish nation from the time of the return from Babylon till its final overthrow by the Romans, after reading this book. In the case of a ruler, whose reputation has come to us only through the word of bitter enemies, it is but fair to cross-examine the witnesses."—*The Unitarian* (Chicago).

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"Readers of biography and students of history are much indebted to Mr. Vickers for his contribution towards a better understanding of a great man, who has certainly come in for far more than the average share of misrepresentation and calumny, always dogging the steps of eminent men in every rank of life. . . . Those passages in Josephus, supposed to have been derived from Nicolaus, are worth much, and they amply justify such acknowledgments of Herod's real greatness as are made by Deans Stanley and Milman, and by Keim, Hausrath, Willett and Vickers. All these historians, however, except the last, take Josephus as their authority and guide in judging of the moral character of Herod, and of the various tragic events and actions of his life, and too often apparently without a thought of questioning the truthfulness of the record, or the justness of the inferences and conclusions. Hence the value of a writer like Vickers, who does challenge both the accuracy of Josephus and the justness of his inferences, and in some cases with considerable acumen and insight."—*The Inquirer*.



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